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GAMER

ISSUE 030 | JUNE 2013

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PG. 23

**E3 2013
PREVIEW**

What we know, and what
we want to know, about
the show's biggest games
PG. 52

CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW 2

WE GET SCARY CLOSE TO DRAC IN THE SERIES' LAST CHAPTER PG. 46

Summer Gaming Gets
Off to a Hot Start

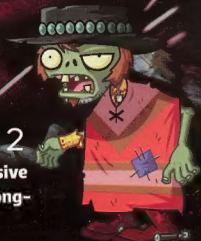
REVIEWS: Metro: Last Light, Remember
Me, Star Trek, Fuse PG. 69

WAR &
PEAS!



Plants vs. Zombies 2

PREVIEW: @GAMER gets exclusive
hands-on time with PopCap's long-
awaited sequel. PG. 14



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In this
ISSUE

46 CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW 2

We flew halfway around the world to find out more about Dracula's return. He's out for blood, literally...

COVER
STORY

GEAR

88

It's high noon in our Gear section this month as the hotshot Turtle Beach XP510s take on the 2013 Astro A40s.

62

GAMES THAT SLIPPED THROUGH THE CRACKS

As the sun sets on this console generation, we take a last look at great games about to go by the wayside.

52
OUR MOST
ANTICIPATED
GAMES OF E3

We're like kids at Christmas, and this is our wish list. We asked for a pony, but two new systems are okay, too...





Plants vs. Zombies 2

Previews

- 14** **Plants vs. Zombies 2**
Prepare your thumbs, a huge wave of zombies is coming...again.

- 18** **Thief**
Garrett sneaks out of retirement after almost a decade of respite.

- 26** **Saints Row IV**
How did an already-insane series get even crazier? Can you say "guns in outer space?"

- 30** **LEGO Marvel Super Heroes**
Throw on your cape and don your Spandex for this adorable adventure.

- 32** **Madden NFL 25**
For a 25-year-old franchise, *Madden's* still got some moves!

- 34** **The Bureau: XCOM Declassified**
Some things are best left unsaid—but *Declassified* is not one of those things.

- 36** **Deadpool**
The merc with a mouth comes to consoles, and it's a bloody good time.

- 38** **Armored Core: Verdict Day**
How many mechs does it take to win the war? Who cares! Let's fight!

- 40** **NHL 14**
Strap on your skates and hit the rink in this year's roughest sports game.

- 41** **DuckTales Remastered**
DuckTales returns! Woo hoo!

- 42** **Shin Megami Tensei IV**
Mingle with monsters in the first numbered *SMT* game in nine years.

- 43** **Dragon's Crown**
We lose our heads over this crazy hack-n-slash RPG.



18

Thief



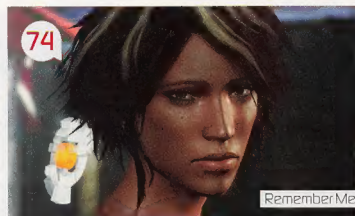
26

Saints Row IV



70

Metro: Last Light



74

Remember Me

NEWS: FIRST TO KNOW

04 STAFF

Who runs this jungle, anyway?

06 BLIPS

All the news that's fit to blip! Plus, a brand-new @GAMER Ultimate.

10 TABLET GAMES

You've got a tablet. We've got gaming expertise on tap.

12 CALENDAR

Release dates? Hey, we thought you'd never ask!

Top Picks

METRO: LAST LIGHT 70

Just when we thought it was over, *Metro* reeled us in for one last crawl through the dark.

REMEMBER ME 74

This is one mind-bending game you may—or may not—want to remember in the morning.

STAR TREK 78

We explored the final frontier with this run-n-stun shooter, but will it live long and prosper?

FUSE 80

Sure, they can infiltrate a space station or two, but can *Overstrike* sneak their way into our hearts?

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY RETURNS 82

Now easier than ever, *DKCR3D* has more hearts and balloons than a bowl of Lucky Charms.

RESIDENT EVIL: REVELATIONS 83

The 3DS-exclusive finally makes its way to consoles, bringing a bevy of changes for the series.

DOWNLOAD DIGEST 84

The low-key lowdown on the best add-ons, episodes, and tiny titles.

AROUND THE WORLD

No passport? No problem! We'll take you around the globe—with games—to show you what you're missing.





MEET THE STAFF



Charlie Barratt
Executive Editor
Charlie was stuck on jury duty this month. Imagining every lawyer as Phoenix Wright helped.



Nick Pino
Associate Editor
Nick recently tried on Luigi's Poltergust 5000 at a Nintendo event. There are pictures.



Jenny Esdaile
Art Director
Staff confession: Jenny's celebrity-gossip rags inspired some of this issue's content additions. Truth!



Jillian Lungaro
Associate Art Director
For someone who claims not to have much time for games, she still talks circles around us on most topics.

Letter from the EDITOR

WELCOME TO @GAMER



We're always looking for ways to improve @GAMER for you readers, and hopefully some of this issue's new features will do just that.

As you flip through the magazine, you'll spot some pages where a yellow @GAMERXTRA tag (like the one below) holds extra content for you. If you're reading @GAMER Digital, you'll be able to view an exclusive video or listen to an audio clip—maybe a look at gameplay or part of a question-and-answer session

with a developer or a sampling of the game's soundtrack. Check out the one below as an example, then look for the **X** logo in other spots. We'd love to hear your feedback, so drop a note to editor@atgamer magazine.com.

(If you're reading the print version of the magazine, you may want to consider switching over to the digital version, so you can get in on these extras.)

Andy Eddy
Editor-in-Chief



@GAMERXTRA

If you were reading @GAMER's digital edition, you'd be able to listen to an audio message from Andy Eddy in this tag.

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Future



LEGAL STUFF

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WRITE
US!



When will @GAMER learn that I want scratch 'n' sniff magazines? I want to smell these electronic things!

#MyStrangeAddiction

—@sillyjanie via Twitter

ED: Thanks for the compliment...I think. While the iScratch'n'Sniff app is still a few years away, we're rolling out some brand-new functionality on our digital edition starting this issue! Sure, you can't smell any of it, but you'll get to touch, hear, and see more @GAMER than ever before. That's three out of five senses we've got in every issue. (We've done some testing on "taste," and the results weren't favorable.)

Why does the digital edition have a "coupons page," but doesn't actually display any coupons there?

—@super_mario64 via Twitter

ED: Hey, Mario! When you get the email saying the new issue is available, there's a

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separate link to the coupons as shown above.

So, Blizzard does console gamers a favor and releases *Diablo 3* on the PS3/4 and all anyone does is whine? As a PC gamer it takes years to get ports on my platform and half the time they're not even very good. Heck, I still haven't played 2013's Game of the Year, *Red Dead Redemption*, because there's no PC port yet—I'm looking in your direction, Rockstar. My point is: Why is everyone so upset that Blizzard is doing console gamers a favor by releasing a game on their platforms?

—John S. via email

ED: That's a very fair question, John. While preemptive cyni-

cism is a major problem in the industry, it wasn't the content of the message that got the Sony crowd up in arms, but how it was presented. The announcement took place at Sony's big PS4 reveal this year. Seeing a huge PC-exclusive publisher like Blizzard at a console event made us hope we were getting a new IP to finally close the gap between PCs and consoles once and for all. When that didn't happen...well, the Internet didn't take too kindly to it.

PAGE
DOWN



FOLLOW UP...

Injustice review update for multiplayer

Testing the online play in *Injustice: Gods Among Us*, we found very smooth, lag-free action. As in *Mortal Kombat*, King of the Hill is the stand-out gameplay mode, letting you watch rivals' matches and talk trash while you wait. Whatever the mode, though, the online play is just as polished as the rest of the experience. No score change.

—Andrew Hayward

BEST BUY CUSTOMER REVIEWS & RATINGS

WANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

What are you playing? Do you like it? Do you hate it? Let other @GAMER readers know what you think—send in a 50- to 100-word review to reviews@atgamer.com, and we'll post 'em in each issue.

Submit your review to:
reviews@atgamer.com

INJUSTICE

Once you get past a few control faux-pas, this fighting game based around the DC Comics universe opens itself up for hours of fun. Though the wonderful combos and interactive levels are occasionally tarnished by lackluster controls, blasting Bats into space and then launching him back down to Earth will surely entertain even the most apathetic of brawlers.

Score: 4/5

—Jordan Oscar

GAMING TRENDS, 140 CHARACTERS AT A TIME

Get more at @GAMER



ANDY EDDY [TWITTER: @VIDGAMES](#)

Latently, I've been playing Google's *Ingress* a lot, and when you play a lot, you need to fill up your car more often. #UniqueGamingProblem



CHARLIE BARRATT [TWITTER: @CHARLIEBARRATT](#)

Little Inferno. A three-hour, \$3 iPhone game that I found almost as thought-provoking as *BioShock Infinite*. Play it.



NICK PINO [TWITTER: @PEENDADDDY](#)

How do you beat Solomon Grundy in *Injustice*? I feel like I should only temporarily lose until he respawns, angrier, the next day.



@GAMERXTRA

If you were reading @GAMER's digital edition, you'd be able to listen to our podcast right here.

Blips...

News, rumors, and game culture deconstructed

NEWS BITES

BIOSHOCK INFINITE is rumored to include a new AI companion for its upcoming downloadable content due out later this year.

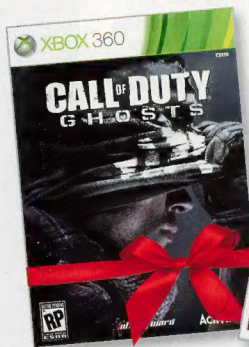


THE EVIL WITHIN, a new third-person survival horror game, has been announced by Tango GameWorks (a studio headed by *Resident Evil* alum, Shinji Mikami) and will hit shelves sometime later next year.



HOT HOLIDAY GAMES

THE FALL HEATS UP WITH **ARKHAM PREQUEL** AND **CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS**



Start-up the Bat-sled and prepare your utility stockings...the holiday season's hottest games have officially gotten a green light from their publishers. Announced in early April, *Batman: Arkham Origins* will be the latest entry in the Arkham trilogy that looks to shed a bat-emblazoned light on Wayne's early days in the cowl.

While Bats is going back to his darkened past, the *Call of Duty*

series marches forward with *Call of Duty: Ghosts*. Not much is known about *Infinity Ward's* first foray into the world after *Modern Warfare*, but we can say that EA's *Battlefield 4* will have some stiff competition this year. Now, if we can just get *Watch Dogs* and *Metal Gear Solid V* slated for the PS4 and "next Xbox" launch windows, we'll submit those time-off requests...six months in advance. ☺

The @GAMER Knowledge Check

FROM OFF THE PODCAST AND ONTO THE PAGE!

With a new *Call of Duty* exploding onto the scene this month, we think it's time to go back to bootcamp with *Infinity Ward* lore. Before Vince Zampella and Jason West founded the studio in 2002, where did they work?



THE RAPTR REPORT

What are the hottest games being played by Xbox 360 and PC gamers? Raptr.com has the answer.

◉ BORDERLANDS 2



1 **CoD: Black Ops II**

2 **League of Legends**

3 **Minecraft**

4 **DOTA 2**

5 **World of Warcraft**

6 **BioShock Infinite**

7 **Defiance** **NEW**

8 **FIFA Soccer 13**

9 **Borderlands 2**

10 **Battlefield 3**

11 **Gears of War: Judgment**

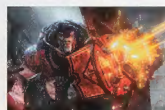
12 **The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim**

13 **Halo 4**

14 **Team Fortress 2**

15 **Rift**

◉ **GEARS OF WAR: JUDGMENT**



30 MINUTES OR LESS!

PIZZA HUT MAKES ITS XBOX LIVE DEBUT \\\

In a way to decrease human interaction, Pizza Hut has recently released its Xbox Live App allowing its users to order without ever leaving the dashboard (or their bathrobes!) What will they think of next? Our money's on a Mountain Dew IV.



GAMES DO GOOD

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE, 1UP AT A TIME

PARLEZ-VOUS "SUL SUL?" \\\

According to a recent study by Kaplan International, 24% of the 500 ESL (English as a Second Language) instructors they interviewed use videogames as a way to help their students learn part of the English language. Though The Sims was used the most at around 14%, such games as SimCity and Second Life also helped their fair share of students learn the difference between "there," "their," and "they're." We're so proud their doing great...aw, shoot.

A CASUAL TAKE ON A NOT-SO-CASUAL DISEASE \\\

Adolescent cancer patients around the U.S. got a dose of good news last month from the team at HopeLab, a collaborative California-based team that designed Re-Mission 2. The free collection of online games acts as a teaching tool to help those affected by the disease, showing them exactly how treatment options (such as chemotherapy) actually combat malignant cells in their bodies. While it's no replacement for a cure, helping those affected by the disease stay motivated in their treatment process sounds like a 5 out of 5 idea to us.

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

MERCURYSTEAM -
SAN SEBASTIÁN DE LOS REYES, SPAIN



DARK, GLOOMY, AND AWESOME!

Located just outside of Madrid, MercurySteam hosts a gaggle of gothic era-loving employees diligently working hard on the latest *Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 2* game. If you thought Drac's castle is dark, wait until you see these offices.

RINGING THE BELLS

Animal Crossing: New Leaf gets special 3DS XL Bundle

Fans of beach combing and fossil hunting can rest easy knowing that the until-now Japanese-only version of the *Animal Crossing: New Leaf* 3DS XL will be launching alongside the game on June 9.

Who said you
can't change the
world through
gaming?

Five Questions with...

CLAIM TO
FAME...
Creator of *Mega
Man*, Capcom
veteran



KEIJI INAFUNE

CEO and Founder of Concept

1 How'd you get started in videogames?

When I started long ago, I wanted to build my career on what I do well, and back then that was drawing. I was looking for a job drawing characters, so I became a character designer at Capcom.

2 What's an average day at the office like?

I have my own independent company now, much smaller than Capcom, and I feel really privileged because back in the Capcom days there were so many different meetings and projects and so little time, I was only able to meet with my teams for maybe 10 minutes. Now I can spend 80% of my time on creative jobs, so I'm really satisfied.

3 What are your non-gaming interests?

Since I don't have to attend boring business meetings anymore, I go to tennis school every week. I may be a superstar game creator, but I'm not a superstar tennis player.

4 In the past you spoke out about problems in the Japanese games industry. How do you feel about it these days?

I am feeling that people in the industry are now sensing the existing problems more clearly compared to when I made those comments. But I wouldn't say that things are completely better at this stage. It will still take some time, but I would say we are in a better situation when we start seeing a few of the Japanese games rank in the top 10.

5 Is there anything you'd like to say to Mega Man for his 25th birthday?

I am so grateful, and so very happy that I was able to create this character, and I wish Mega Man a very special and happy, happy birthday!

Blips...

More news, rumors, and game culture deconstructed

CASTLEVANIA CHARACTER EVOLUTION



CASTLEVANIA

Every adventure starts somewhere, and series protagonist Simon Belmont's started here.



SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV

Back in 1991 it was hard to believe that games could get any better than seeing Castlevania in full 16-bit graphics.



CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

...and again when the game took a more exploratory route in SotN.



CASTLEVANIA: ORDER OF ECCLESIA

Order of Ecclesia had a ton of firsts for the series—the most memorable being its first female character, Shanoa.



CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW

Gabriel got more than he bargained for in Lords of Shadow, but saving your loved one's soul was worth it, right?

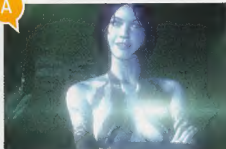
MIX & MATCH

Guys and Gals! Match the main character with their leading lady.

1



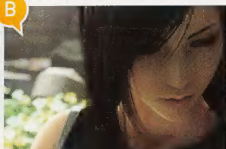
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2



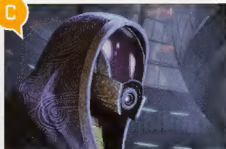
B



3



C



4



D



ANSWERS: 1-D, 2-C, 3-A, 4-B

DOUBLE TAKE

Find the 10 things that make these two pictures different!



For answers visit our facebook page: [facebook.com/ATGAMER](https://www.facebook.com/ATGAMER)

@GAMER ULTIMATE

[Heroine]

What's @GAMER Ultimate?
It's our place to give our
feedback on the best...

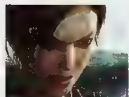
What makes a great female
character? Here's what
we've discovered.



01

SHE'S A LEADER

True, Lightning never wanted to be a leader. But not once did she ever step down from that challenge in *Final Fantasy XIII*. She was always ready to lead her team and save her sister.



02

SHE'S NOT AFRAID

The greatest action heroes aren't afraid to go it alone. No one proved that point better than Lara Croft. In every *Tomb Raider*, Lara showed she's tough and that action games weren't just a boys' club, as she tested her mettle against the worst nature could do.



03

SHE'S A TECHIE

Whether it's her habitual use of the power bomb in *Super Metroid* or her operation of a super suit that did... well, everything, Samus Aran made sure to bring everything she needed to get the job done.



04

SHE KNOWS PARKOUR

Not every action hero is a muscle-bound bro. If Faith from *Mirror's Edge* taught us anything, it's that brains are much, much better than brawn.



by Andrew Hayward



Featured Game:

BRAIN PLEASER

Twists keep this favorite feeling fresh



CUT THE ROPE: TIME TRAVEL HD

Platforms: Apple, Android

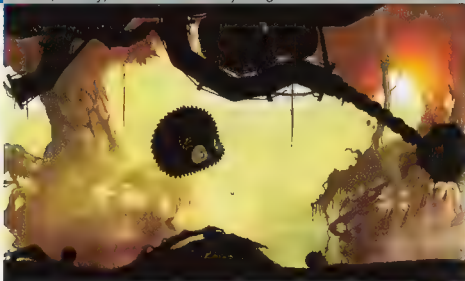
\$2.99, ZeptoLab, zeptolab.com



One of the biggest tablet hits returns with *Cut the Rope: Time Travel HD*, a new spin on the familiar physics puzzler that adds a second Om Nom creature to satisfy. The colorful aesthetic remains intact, with an array of swipes and taps used to help guide pieces of candy across the stage and into the green creatures' mouths. Doing so is rarely a simple process, however, and *Time Travel* packs in an array of new twists—such as spinning blades and a movement-freezing button—to create 90 fresh brainteasers to solve. It's not terribly difficult on the high end for now, but many more stages are sure to come soon via free updates.

Bombs and blades are helpful tools here.

▼ Cute, cuddly, and surrounded by danger.



BADLAND

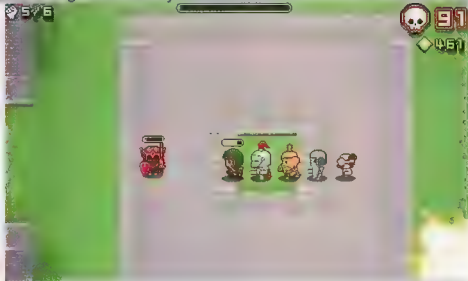
Platforms: Apple, Android

\$3.99, Frogmind, badlandgame.com



Impressing out of the gate with a shadowy, *Limbo*-inspired look—albeit with vivid, color-filled backdrops—*Badland* delivers a side-scrolling rush through various obstacle courses filled with such hazards as bombs and spinning fan blades. Starting with one winged creature, you'll add others to your pack while growing them larger and smaller as needed, all with the goal of reaching the end of each stage. While the visuals are easy on the eyes, the gameplay is quite challenging.

▼ Live together or (likely) die alone.



NIMBLE QUEST

Platforms: Apple, Android

Free, NimbleBit, nimblebit.com



Using the classic game *Snake* as a starting point, *Nimble Quest* delivers a breezy action affair with fantasy role-playing elements. Guiding an ever-growing line of warriors, you must navigate compact maps while defeating foes, recruiting allies, and snagging helpful items. Simple swipes turn your party to avoid enemies and walls, and the goal is to last as long as possible through multiple stages while leveling up. Follow the leader never seemed so heroic!

Heroes hit hard, thanks to digital cards.



INJUSTICE: GODS AMONG US

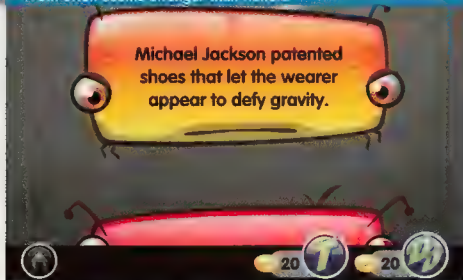


Platforms:

Free, Warner Bros, injustice.com

Unlike the excellent console versions, *Injustice: Gods Among Us* for iPad takes a tag-team approach to its battles between iconic DC Comics heroes and villains, and also works in a collectible card-game element as you assemble a deck made of fighter cards. It's a much simpler brawling affair, with mere taps and swipes used for punches and superpowers alike—but it's also a free tablet game. Luckily, the flashy super moves remain intact.

Truth often seems stranger than fiction.



LIE SWATTER



Platforms:

Free, Jellyvision, lieswatter.com

From the makers of *You Don't Know Jack* comes another hilarious trivia title, this time challenging you to discern fact from fiction across an array of pop-culture categories—such as Michael Jackson or baseball. *Lie Swatter* serves up seven statements in each, and asks you to "swat" the insect-shaped lies in the bunch. Weed out the truth better than your opponent and you'll emerge victorious, but even if you fail, the process is plenty fun.

Grab speed wherever you are

DRIVE ANYWHERE

GO RACE!

You don't need a console or a powerful PC to have a great racing experience. It's not hard to find a great racing game on iPad or Android tablets, including simulations, arcade-style action, and more stylized affairs. Here are five of the top tablet racing picks.



01 REAL RACING 3

(free, ea.com)

Slick and sophisticated, EA's free-to-play racer is a standout simulation racer that includes dozens of licensed cars, several real-world tracks, and hundreds of total events that you can play and play without spending a penny.



02 SONIC & SEGA ALL-STARS RACING

(\$1.99, sega.com)

Sega's entertaining take on *Maria Kart* translates well to the iPad, with most of the colorful tracks and many familiar drivers included, albeit at a much lower price. It's full of fan service, but is also just a fun, accessible racer.



03 RECKLESS RACING 2

(\$1.99, polarbit.com)

Featuring a top-down perspective on its mix of dirt and tarmac tracks, *Reckless Racing 2* is expectedly a more raucous option, where you'll whip around the ample turns while knocking around rivals. It's great online, too.



04 ASPHALT 7: HEAT

(\$0.99, gameloft.com)

Incredible speed is the highlight of Gameloft's latest arcade racing entry, which lets you spin more than 60 real cars through glossy international locales. And with both online action and offline cups, there's plenty to enjoy.



05 FOREVER DRIVE

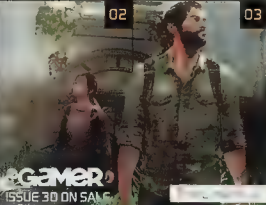
(free, supermono-studios.com)

Rather than outrun competitors, *Forever Drive* pits you against the clock across a wide array of futuristic tracks. It looks and sounds like *Tron*, plus you can create and share the stages that are randomly pulled into play.

JUNE 2013

It's National Accordion Awareness Month!

■ Game Release Date ■ The @GAMER Podcast ■ This day in videogame history...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 If you want to keep tabs on all of the pre-order specials that Best Buy and game publishers have put together, just scan this QR code with your smartphone. One webpage will tell all! 			1 NCAA Football 14: Dynasty Warriors 8: Rune Factory 4: Shin Megami Tensei IV: Time and Eternity: The Smurfs 2:			01
02  THE @GAMER PODCAST: ISSUE 30 ON SALE	03 EVE Online: Odyssey Remember Me	04	05	06	07 THE @GAMER PODCAST: EPISODE 65  Remember Me	08
09 Animal Crossing: New Leaf	10	11 Dark The Last of Us	12	13	14  Deadpool	15 SEE PAGE 74
16 FATHER'S DAY  Deadpool	17	18	19	20 The Raven: Legacy of a Master Thief 	21 THE @GAMER PODCAST: EPISODE 66  The Sims 3: Island Paradise	22
23 Game & Wario 	24	25 Company of Heroes 2 Deadpool Muramasa Rebirth Project X Zone Ride to Hell: Retribution The Sims 3: Island Paradise	26	27	28	29

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Pre-Order Exclusives



DISNEY INFINITY

Publisher: Disney Interactive Studios
Developer: Avalanche Software
Release Date: August 18, 2013
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii U, Wii, PC

Pre-order any Disney Infinity starter pack at Best Buy and nab an extra figurine for free when you crack open this digital toy chest on launch day.



SAINTS ROW IV

Publisher: Deep Silver
Developer: Volition
Release Date: August 20, 2013
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

Future presidents who pre-order Saints Row IV at Best Buy will receive the "Commander in Chief" DLC pack, netting you the patriotic Uncle Sam outfit, extra weapons, and the appropriately named "screaming eagle" jet.



SPLINTER CELL BLACKLIST

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft Toronto
Release Date: August 20, 2013
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii U, PC

Enlist early for Sam Fisher's latest mission to get the exclusive Upper Echelon Pack, which includes an Echelon Suit, Gold Sonar Goggles, and bonus Aral Sea mission.



LOST PLANET 3

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Spark Unlimited
Release Date: August 27, 2013
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

Don't brave the snow without the in-game Assault Pack. Pre-order at Best Buy to get the Destructeur Assault Rifle, Shotgun, and Pneumatic Injector gun. This is one loadout that will send the Akrid running!



PLANTS vs. ZOMBIES 2



Chris McMillan and David LaRocca for PopCap Games • PHILIP HARRIS

That I was going to have a blast visiting PopCap's Seattle offices for a first peek at *Plants vs. Zombies 2* went without saying. With games that range from *Bejeweled* to *Bookworm Adventures* to *Peggle* to *Zuma*, the company has proven it knows how to entertain.

What caught me, though, was the realization of how much thought went into constructing the PvZ sequel so that it maintained the elegant gameplay found in the 2009 original, but would be more fun and more playable. The game-makers also endeavored to design something that takes full advantage of a touch-screen device. It's a big reason

why PvZ2 will make its debut on July 18 on iOS devices, followed not long after by an Android version. (PopCap promises it'll be adapted to other platforms, but is holding off discussing those for the time being.)

One of the new gameplay concepts is Plant Food. If you kill a glowing zombie, you'll bank one (and can store up to four), which can then be dragged to any plant for PvZ's version of "alt fire." For instance, if you need to quickly place a plant, but don't have enough banked sun power, dragging Plant Food to a sunflower literally causes it to light up and rapidly spit out sun icons for a few seconds. The effect is similar for

offensive plants, such as *Bloomingang* firing a stream of projectiles forward and to the sides.

The other big change is the addition of manual interaction on a short timer. Clicking one of the three icons sitting at the bottom enables you to pinch the heads off of whatever zombies (or groups) you can get your fingers on; knock zombies backwards with a left-to-right flick of your finger (a quick double-swipe will knock zombies off the playfield altogether); or fry zombies with electricity by scribbling your finger across them onscreen.

We can't wait to get our hands on *PvZ2*...figuratively and literally. ☺

▼ The Pirate Seas world map shows how much you have to accomplish.



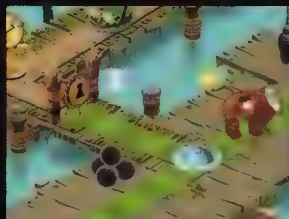
LEVEL PLAYING FIELDS \\\ PopCap told me that, while there was a lot of love for the original PvZ, hardcore gamers felt it was too easy. With the sequel, PopCap has endeavored to give everyone a game they'll again love, but one that will also challenge skilled gamers. For example, Star Challenges will test you with new objectives for already-completed levels.

PVZ2 TAKES FULL ADVANTAGE OF A TOUCH-SCREEN DEVICE



▲ The British subway has a saying, "Mind the Gap." Pirate levels concur.

★ KEY MOMENTS \\\



LOCK BLOCKS \\\

You'll find locked gates at some spots on each world map, with a key earned during gameplay enabling you to open one. Open gates gives you access to Brain Buster levels.



▼ In PvZ, the Yeti Zombie was an "Easter Egg." In PvZ2, he's...uh, not.

FROM FEE TO FREE



PRICE VS. ZOMBIES

Plants vs. Zombies 2 will be free to install on your iOS or Android device (unlike the original, which you likely had to buy, depending on when you got it). You'll be able to download, play, and complete the entire game without paying if you choose, though certain plants, some enhancements, and in-game currency will require payment to add. If a fraction of the players pay for anything and **PvZ2** does as well as the original game (which had over 150 million installs), PopCap should get a decent return from its development investment.

IMPROVED STRATEGY ▼ In the first game, I often found myself without a plant in a lane where I needed it, leaving the mower as my sole remaining defense. The **PvZ2** levels I was given the opportunity to try showed me how much PopCap put into boosting the sequel's playability. For instance, **PvZ2**'s punch-happy Bonk Choi can strike forward and behind. One plant (after you put Plant Food on it) sprays an arc of projectiles that hit targets in multiple lanes. And the ability to activate a touch gesture means you'll rarely find yourself defenseless.

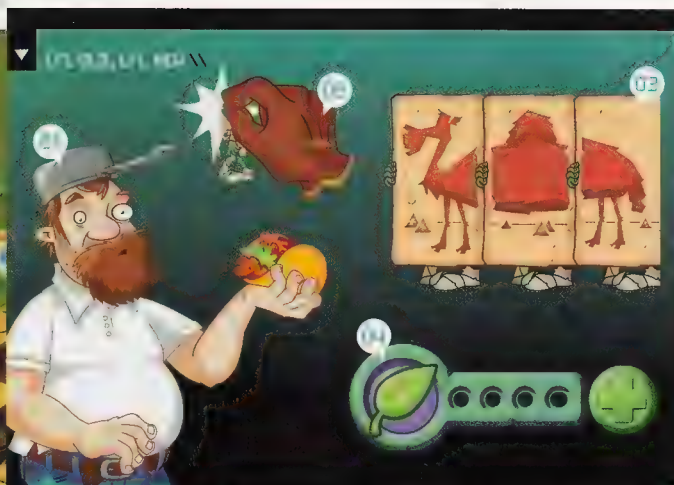


▼ Plants that attack in multiple directions help you save your mowers.



@GAMERXTRA

In @GAMER's digital edition, you'd be able to listen to a sample of the **Plants vs. Zombies 2** soundtrack here.



01 CRAZY-DAY

Many Dave's return to the game in a new form. They

02 YOU GEST

Now Dave's back to the game in a new form. They

03 MARCH GAME

Now Dave's back to the game in a new form. They

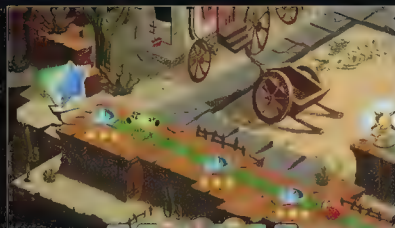
04 KUNG FOOD

Now Dave's back to the game in a new form. They

Wild West world adds rail cars, so you can move a plant where it's needed.



▼ Snapdragon
Dragons breathe fire, so expect the same from its veggie cousin.



World maps show what you've completed (and how well), but also where you earn new plants.

GAME DETAILS



PLANTS VS. ZOMBIES 2

INFO

Publisher: PopCap
Developer: PopCap
Platforms: iOS, Android
(others TBA)

RELEASE DATE

July 18, 2013 (iOS); "later in the summer" (Android)

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Action-strategy

SUITABLE FOR

Anyone wanting a fun, funny—yet still challenging—game

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



Play the original *Plants vs. Zombies* if you haven't already. If you have, play it again.

WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Plants vs. Zombies 2*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Vastly enhanced, enriched gameplay
- ♥ Sequel designed for touch-screen interaction
- ♥ Free to play...

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ ...though some plants and likely add-on worlds will carry a charge



THIEF

The grandfather of stealth returns from retirement

• Words: Charlie Barratt



WHEN YOU PICK
A POCKET, YOU
CAN FEEL THE
TEXTURE OF
THE CLOTH

Hands On
A thief's fingers
are their best tools,
and help provide
info to the player.

Years before Sam Fisher shot out his first light, Garrett the master thief was snuffing torches from the shadows with a carefully aimed, silently released ice arrow. A decade before Altair chopped off his finger to make room for a hidden assassin blade, Garrett sacrificed an eyeball, replacing it with a mechanical orb that enhanced his vision. A lifetime before Corvo Attano teleported through the aesthetic mashup of Dunwall in search of whale oil, Garrett crept through The City, a steampunk-medieval hybrid setting full of wizards, zombies, and mystical artifacts.

As the young whippersnappers he inspired have gone on to annual franchises and billions of dollars in sales, this grandfather of the stealth game has been largely forgotten in recent years, relegated to a nostalgic footnote. Based on my in-depth demo of the rebooted *Thief*, however, 2014 will change all that.

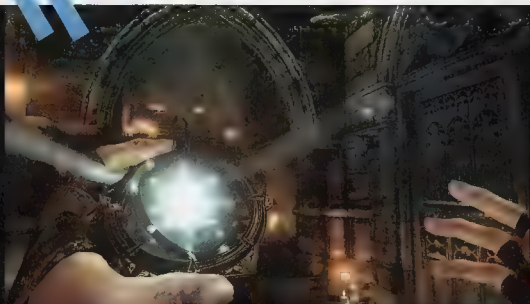
The series' new developers at Eidos Montreal hope to reinvent Garrett for a modern audience while remaining true to his legacy. He still shoots arrows, but with more strategy and more visceral force behind each one. I saw him trap a guard by targeting a cell-door switch; I also saw him slaughter a guard by targeting the jugular of his throat. He's still

got that fancy eye, only now it allows him to peer inside the inner workings of a lock, scan environments for fingerprints, and pinpoint an enemy's anatomy for weak points. He still blends from shadow to shadow in *The City*, but he can leap from rooftop to rooftop as well—Garrett 2.0 free-runs across buildings like Faith from *Mirror's Edge*, shimmies along ledges like Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider*, and hangs upside down on a rope like the predatory bats of *Arkham City*.

All of this is brought to dark and gritty life by a next-gen engine that's powerful enough for real-time reflections in rain puddles, individual fog particles, and fire that spreads along non-scripted paths. When you're picking someone's pocket, developers want you to believe that "you can feel the texture of the cloth." (*Thief* is planned for PS4, PC, and other next-gen consoles.)

What's most impressive and immersive, though, is simple: Garrett's hands. Constantly visible onscreen, they indicate just by their location, position, and lighting whether he's safely hidden behind a box, or under a curtain, or within shadow. Because even with the many new gameplay tricks and powers, staying out of sight trumps everything else. Once a thief, always a thief. @

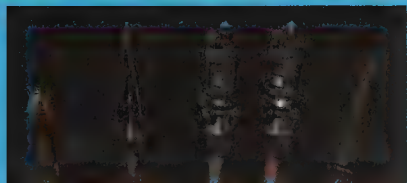
This isn't an
origin story:
Garrett starts
the game with
— skills.



Remember, stealing is wrong. Unless it's from these guys...they look like they deserve it.

HIDDEN JUST BENEATH \\\

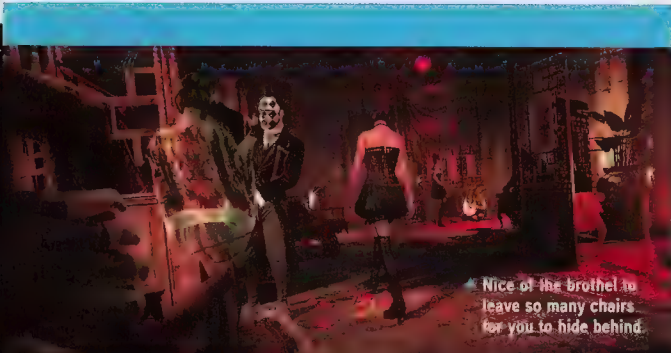
My favorite moments in the old *Thief* games happened as a seemingly medieval reality gave way, bit by bit, to magic and fantasy. Will you creep through a haunted cathedral, steal from wizards, or fight mechanical beasts in the new one? Watching Garrett uncover a mysterious glowing compass and then use it to reveal and decipher invisible glyphs on the wall has me hopeful. The developers promise me they haven't forgotten how scary the original *Thief* could be, either.



TO THE POINT \\\ Choosing an eight command is crucial in *Thief*. Is the game's first person view? Is it a first person, second person, third person, or a fourth person? Is it a first person, second person, third person, or a fourth person? Is it a first person, second person, third person, or a fourth person?



Thief is mostly first-person, but switches to third when that view makes sense.



WEALTH REDISTRIBUTION \\\ Class warfare plays a large role in *Thief's* story, with The City hub world evolving between missions as an angry revolution rises up against the rich. Whether Garrett chooses a side is unknown, but I did witness him infiltrate an exotic evening club—House of Blossoms—in pursuit of a corrupt government architect wearing a shiny medallion around his neck. Wealthy masked patrons flirted cluelessly as he flitted between shadows, lifting their wallets and jewelry. They sure seemed to notice when he cranked the opium furnaces to toxic levels, however...an optional objective only available if you pay close attention to the conversations you overhear.



▲ Your mechanical eye provides "focus" that highlights useful objects.



▲ In *Thief's* engine, this burning building can fall apart in many different ways.

STEALING SHERLOCK \\\

How's a scrawny sneak supposed to overwhelm a burly guard in armor with nothing but a black-jack? Garrett takes a clue from the movie version of Sherlock Holmes, using his observant eye and focused mind to pinpoint an enemy's vulnerabilities—an exposed joint, for example—then strike with extreme speed and prejudice.



GAME DETAILS



THIEF

INFO

Publisher: Square Enix
Developer: Eidos Montreal
Platforms: PS4, PC

RELEASE DATE

TBA 2014

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

TBA

GENRE

Stealth

SUITABLE FOR

Those who find Sam Fisher too loud and Batman too clumsy

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



Dishonored is the closest thing to a *Thief* game we've had in years, but with bonus Jedi powers!

WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Thief*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Looks and feels like an authentic *Thief* game
- ♥ Next-gen graphics and visceral new gameplay keep off the dust
- ♥ Garrett as cool as ever

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Will it borrow too heavily from the newer games it inspired?

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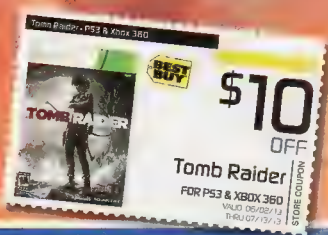
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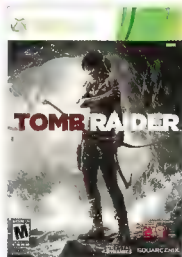
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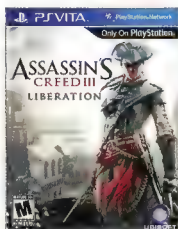
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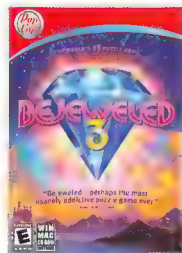
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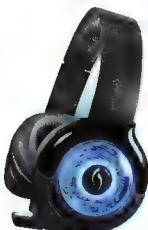
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HE BLEW UP THEIR PLANET.
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YOU HAVE **SUPER**
STRENGTH, SPEED, AND
JUMPING THAT ALMOST
FEELS LIKE FLYING





SAINTS ROW IV

Aliens, virtual reality, and superpowers...oh my Words: Dennis Scimeca

If you thought controlling a media empire in *Saints Row: The Third* was an awesome game gig, wait until you see what's added to your resume in *Saints Row IV*: nothing less than the President of the United States of America. As powerful a promotion as that is, however, it wasn't enough to prevent a race of aliens called the Zin from invading Earth, taking you and your fellow Saints gang prisoner, and trapping you all in a virtual-reality simulation.

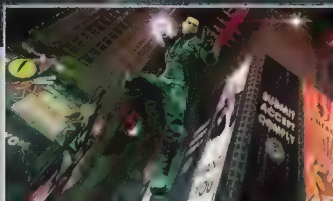
Of course, the good thing about virtual reality is that you're not stuck with the rules of the physical world. You're trapped in a digital prison, but you have superpowers to fight back. With super strength, super speed, super jumping that almost feels like flying, and the ability to shoot freeze rays from your hands—all of which work in conjunction with the guns and vehicles you're already used to enjoying—you'll have plenty of punch to punish the bad guys.

While you are held in a twisted version of Steelport, the other members of your gang are stuck in their own virtual-reality prisons based on their own nightmares. Remember Pierce, the Saint who did television commercials for the Saints Flow energy drink in the last game? When you rescue him, be prepared to battle a giant can of the beverage that's destroying the city.

Suffice to say, *Saints Row IV* is doubling down on the crazy. ©

CHILL OUT ▶

Hit them with your freeze ray and smack them with your baseball bat. Done deal.



▲ *Saints Row IV* features a much more vertical world. Always jump and explore.

SUPERPOWERS, TAKE TWO \\\ Developer Volition included superpowers in *Saints Row: The Third* DLC "The Trouble With Clones," and after seeing their promise, decided to blow them out this time. They're much better, says creative director Steve Jaros: "Before we were forcing superpowers into a system that wasn't ready for them. As we build a system around superpowers, it's much more clean, much more elegant to use in *Saints Row IV*."

MEET THE NEW NEIGHBORS



ALIEN INFANTRY \\\ *Saints Row IV* features a greater variety of enemies than in any previous entry. You'll want to use different combinations of powers and weapons to effectively take different kinds of aliens down.



FLOATING FORTRESSES \\\ The Zin aren't just in the real world. They've followed you into your virtual reality prison. Glowing, alien motherships like these loom ominously in the sky of the Steelport simulation.



◀ *Saints Row IV* also introduces mechs to the franchise for the first time. Get stompy.

NUTTY GUNS FOR A NUTTY GAME



BLOW UP AND GET DOWN // You'll still have conventional weapons (such as pistols and shotguns and machine guns) that you can upgrade as you did in *Saints Row: The Third*, but *Saints Row IV* will also feature some crazy new weapons to go with the crazy new superpowers. The Inflate-O-Ray above blows up people's heads like balloons then, you know, pops them. The Dubstep Gun will make people dance to a bass-heavy beat like you're throwing an instant party right on the street. Finally, there's some kind of melee weapon called "The Penetrator" that Volition has yet to divulge any details about. I can only imagine...

GAME DETAILS



SAINTS ROW IV

INFO

Publisher: Deep Silver
Developer: Volition
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

RELEASE DATE

August 20, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Sandbox

SUITABLE FOR

GTA and *The Matrix* fans ready to get silly

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



Saints Row: The Third sets up jokes in *Saints Row IV* if you want to get caught up.

WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Saints Row IV*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ *Saints Row* absurdity taken to the next level
- ♥ More vertical city means more room to explore
- ♥ Dense with content and collectibles

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✖ New players might not get all the inside jokes



▼ LEGO Captain America fights for life, liberty, and the pursuit of breaking bad guys apart.

LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES

Saving the world, one stud at a time Words: Nick Pind

After decades of rivalry between comic powerhouses DC and Marvel, apparently all it took to unite the two was a couple of LEGOs. Marvel LEGO Super Heroes is the latest open-world adventure from developer TT Games, the very same team responsible for LEGO Batman 2: DC Super Heroes. Now the developer aims to do the same justice to spandex stars like Spider-Man, Hulk, and Iron Man that it did for the residents of Gotham City.

The plot's as opaque as plastic at this point, but here's what we know so far: The world's super heroes must come together (at the request of Nick Fury, of course) to gather up cosmic bricks dropped by Galactus' cosmic wave-riding herald, Silver Surfer. While that one-line synopsis may not have your Spider Sense tingling, the 100+ playable characters available for you to control (see "Avengers Assembled" sidebar) almost certainly will.

The biggest addition to this entry in the LEGO series is what TT Games is calling "Big Figs." These larger-than-average models, perfect for heroes like the Hulk, don't have a single specific power but myriad ways to interact with, and often destroy, the environment around them.

During my demo, I saw Hulk rip pieces of concrete up from the ground to use as projectiles in his fight against an unruly Sandman, then wrestle head-to-head with his U.S.S.R.-spawned rival, Abomination (also represented with a Big Fig). The green giant can access secret locations by smashing through barriers found across the Marvel-inspired New York City hub level, and even lend a brainier hand in mission-specific puzzle segments by transforming back to puny Bruce Banner form. Who says good things can't come in small packages? ●



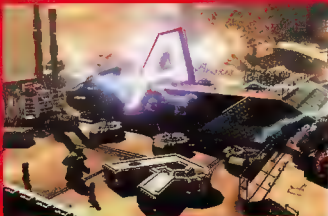


AVENGERS ASSEMBLED

Expect over 100 heroes, each with his or her own unique powers. If every costume is as elaborately, adorably detailed as those shown here, this will be one of the best reasons to go collectible hunting I've seen yet.



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION



▲ "Now there's something you don't see every day...a building I don't own."

▲ Having recognizable parts of Marvel's Manhattan, developers say, is crucial.



▲ Getting Hulk up on this platform took a ton of teamwork from the three heroes.

@GAMER XTRA

In @GAMER's digital edition, this tag plays a video from the LEGO Marvel Super Heroes demo we saw at GDC '13.

PS3 XBOX360 WiiU PC
3DS DS PSVITA

GAME DETAILS

LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES

INFO

Publisher: Warner Bros.
Interactive Entertainment
Developer: TT Games
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360,
Wii U, PC, DS, 3DS, PS Vita

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Online and local multiplayer

GENRE

Action

SUITABLE FOR

Pint-sized servers of justice

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!

LEGO Batman 2: DC Super

Heroes is currently developer TT's go-to game for superhero hijinks.

WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for LEGO Marvel Super Heroes.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Huge emphasis on characters playing differently
- ♥ Drop-in, drop-out multiplayer has been taken back out of the box
- ♥ Hysterical, conversational dialogue between the onscreen heroes

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Plot may not satisfy my Marvel storytelling hunger

MADDEN NFL 25

Celebrating a quarter century on the virtual gridiron • Words: Richard Grisham

Believe it or not, the Madden franchise has been around for 25 years. From its early days on Super Nintendo and Genesis through today, Madden has come to define videogame football. To celebrate, EA Sports appears focused on delivering an experience that will appeal to its most dedicated—and demanding—fans, representing as closely as possible what happens on the field and behind the scenes for real NFL teams.

Front and center this season is Infinity Engine 2.0, an improved physics system that produces more lifelike tackles, collisions, and player interactions while eliminating the post-whistle slapstick silliness that was an unfortunate by-product of its introduction last year. The new Force Impact system will take a

player's size, strength, and position at the point of contact into account to determine who wins tackling battles; combined with the Hit Stick, a virtually unlimited variety of outcomes is possible. Tackling animations and pre-determined reactions have become a thing of the past.

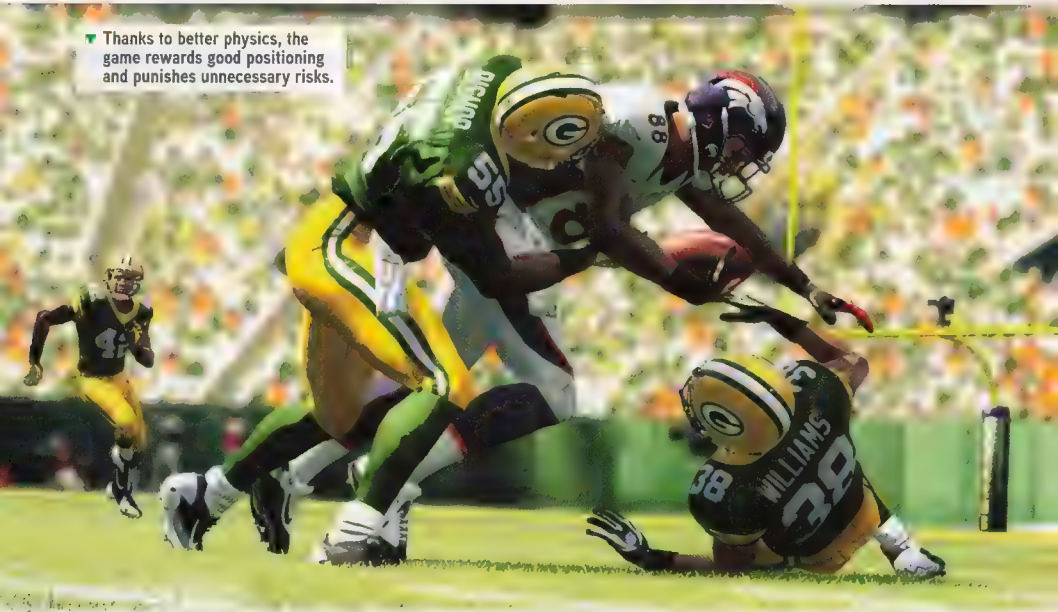
Madden also recognizes that while there's a strong contingent of pass-happy NFL squads, a powerful running back like Adrian Peterson can still dominate at crunch time. To that end, it's doubled down on the critical fundamentals of blocking and running, enlisting offensive line specialists to revamp

play in the trenches. Ball carriers have new creativity with the introduction of Run Free mechanics, allowing multiple changes in speed and powerful combinations of trucks, stiff arms, and jukes to leave pursuing tacklers befuddled.

With Barry Sanders on the front cover, it's no surprise that core fundamentals like running, blocking, and tackling are a focal point of Madden 25. Passing was vastly improved last season, so it's a natural progression to make fine-tuned adjustments that will appeal to its biggest fans as Madden closes one generation and moves into another. ©

TACKLING ANIMATIONS HAVE BECOME A THING OF THE PAST

Thanks to better physics, the game rewards good positioning and punishes unnecessary risks.





▼ A heavy focus on solid blocking should translate into a balance between passing and running.



BE YOUR OWN TYRANT \\\

While there's an understandable focus on the field, significant new additions are being made to the groundbreaking single- and multiplayer modes introduced last season. Connected Careers has been rebranded Connected Franchise, expanding the roles you can explore; not only are individual players and coaches available, but you'll be able to fill the well-heeled shoes of an owner who needs to make tough decisions impacting everyone associated with the team.



▲ The best runners have more tools, like combos of stiff arms, trucks, and jukes.



▲ "Breakdown behavior" lets defenders target their opponents with precision.

UP THE MIDDLE \\\

Interior running has long been a staple of successful Madden game plans, but last year's Infinity Engine unwittingly introduced issues that decreased its effectiveness. The "Man Wall" problem—a runner getting knocked over by his own offense—has been eliminated thanks to backs now guiding themselves in and around their blockers. You won't be hesitant to call off-tackle power runs and halfback dives anymore.



GAME DETAILS

PS3 XBOX 360



MADDEN NFL 25

INFO

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Tiburon
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE

August 27, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Up to 6-player cooperative and 2-player competitive online; up to 6-player (PS3) and 4-player (Xbox 360) local

GENRE

Sports

SUITABLE FOR

Petulant would-be football moguls and gridiron generals

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!

Madden NFL 13 was the freshest, most innovative football game of the generation and still receives updates.



WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Madden NFL 25*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Smarter blocking has been needed in *Madden* for a decade
- ♥ Connected Franchises are fun for single players as well as with friends online

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✖ In-depth controls can be overwhelming to newcomers

THE BUREAU: XCOM DECLASSIFIED

This preview will self-destruct in 10 seconds • Words: Malt Cabral

Anyone who's freed a Sectoid of its squishy innards knows XCOM is the clandestine organization that identifies, neutralizes, and covers up close encounters of the terrifying kind. What these extraterrestrial exterminators don't know, though, is how the top secret outfit came to be...until now.

Alyssa Finley, 2K Marin's VP of product development, calls *The Bureau: XCOM Declassified* "a narrative-focused vision of XCOM's origin story." Established by John F. Kennedy during the Cold War, XCOM was created to investigate foreign activity on U.S. soil.

As Finley explains, however, the Soviets are the least of the country's problems. "XCOM was forced to think on their feet, quickly rechristen themselves, and adapt in real time to this alien threat in the American heartland."

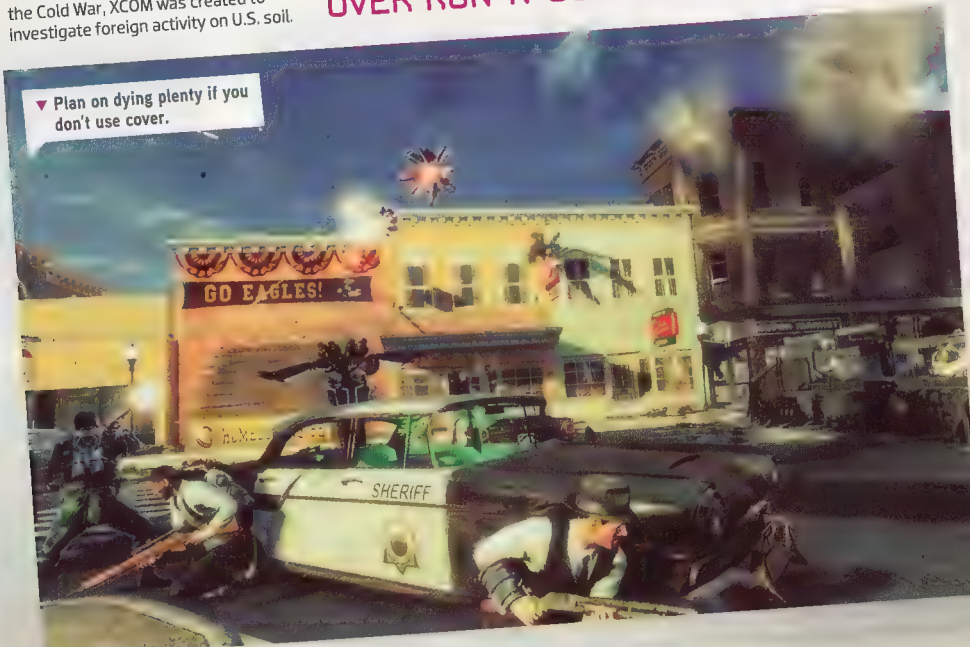
Of course, the intel shared by Finley barely scratches the surface of the Bureau's beginnings. Before you can unravel the complete conspiracy-riddled yarn, they'll need to tan a whole

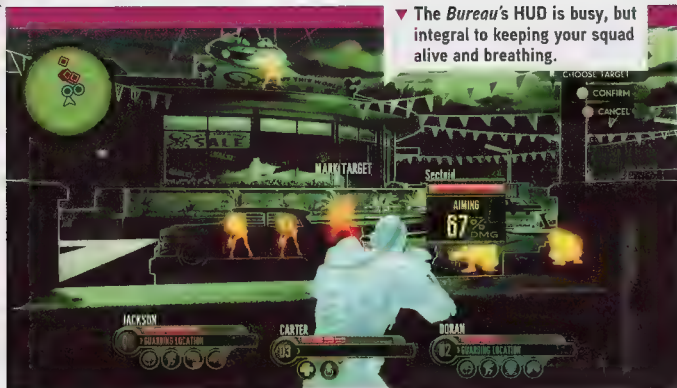
lot of E.T. hide. Thankfully, doing so is an engaging affair blending the best of third-person shooting and squad-commanding tactics. As agent William Carter, you pull the trigger in the trenches, but also issue orders to allies in the field (see "Brainy Battles").

While it retains the series' cerebral gameplay, *The Bureau's* intense action and rich storytelling also promise it'll stand out from the strategy pack. 

FAVORS THOUGHTFUL STRATEGY OVER RUN-N-GUN RECKLESSNESS

▼ Plan on dying plenty if you don't use cover.





▼ The Bureau's HUD is busy, but integral to keeping your squad alive and breathing.

BRAINY BATTLES \\\ While The Bureau's ammo clip-emptying encounters are a far cry from the turn-based melees of *XCOM: Enemy Unknown*, it still favors thoughtful strategy over run-n-gun recklessness. In addition to controlling Carter, you bring two allies—from four classes—into the field. You'll command Engineer, Recon, Commando, and Support specializations via a radial wheel dubbed "Battle Focus." The interface slows the action, allowing you to issue orders, such as "move" and "mark target," as well as class-specific table-turners, such as the Engineer's ability to throw down laser turrets.



▲ Permadeath—an *XCOM* staple—returns to remind you not to let your squad mates die.



▲ Backpacks house alien tech and powers, like the ability to lift enemies into the air.

FRESH THREATS \\\

I blasted standard *XCOM* scum, such as Sectoids and Mutons, but also learned their aggressive actions aren't entirely their own. A more powerful alien race, called Zudjari, has enslaved the more run-of-the-mill menaces. While the relationship between the two isn't clear, its effects include turning humans into babbling "sleepwalkers."



GAME DETAILS

HANDS-ON



THE BUREAU: XCOM DECLASSIFIED

INFO

Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: 2K Marin
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

RELEASE DATE

August 20, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Third-person shooter

SUITABLE FOR

Fans of squad-based strategy and 1960s fashion

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!

XCOM: Enemy Unknown will familiarize you with the series' ugly aliens and tactical combat.



WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *The Bureau: XCOM Declassified*.



WHAT'S GREAT

- ♥ Brain-and-brawn combat
- ♥ Cold War-era setting and style
- ♥ Conspiracy-laced origin story

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT

- ✗ Too much action for core *XCOM*-ers? Too little for shooter fans?

DEADPOOL

Breaking bodies and fourth walls in equal measure

Words: Henry Gilbert

As possibly the most violent, humorous, and insanely unpredictable character in comic books, Deadpool has long deserved his own game, one that embraces those very qualities. Now, after making numerous appearances in other Marvel adventures, the red-clad mutant is finally getting one, releasing later this month. A recent hands-on demo of the early stages certainly captured the spirit of Deadpool in all his M-rated glory—in fact, he comes off a good deal dirtier than usual.

Deadpool is known for breaking the fourth wall when on the printed page, and his game follows suit, almost immediately having him talk directly to the player. He can also see your Achievement unlocks, and even has a brief phone conversation with his voice

actor. As the stage progresses, he's killing goons left and right, all while commenting on the artificiality of his objectives. Despite him pointing out the fictional nature of his missions, though, the game does take the action seriously—combat mixes together melee and gunplay and fits well with Deadpool's uniquely hyperactive style.

Developer High Moon Studios really seems to get the property, much like it did with its Transformers adaptations. Can Deadpool's self-aware ultra-violence entertain for an entire game? We'll know soon enough. **B**

**CAPTURES THE
SPIRIT OF THE
COMIC IN ALL ITS
M-RATED GLORY**



MARVELOUS FRIENDS

Deadpool is firmly set in the Marvel universe. There are references to Spider-Man and the X-Men, but the best fan service is an appearance by Cable, former X-Force leader and one of the few people who can tolerate Deadpool long enough for a team-up. His cameo included two of the funnier moments in my demo: a profanely titled song and a lengthy exposition that Deadpool can only listen to for 60 seconds before shooting himself.

◀ Avoid all eye contact when Deadpool comes out of your TV. Common sense.

GAME DETAILS



DEADPOOL

INFO

Publisher: Activision
Developer: High Moon Studios
Platform: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

RELEASE DATE

June 25, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Action

SUITABLE FOR

Comic fans with a lust for laughs (and blood)

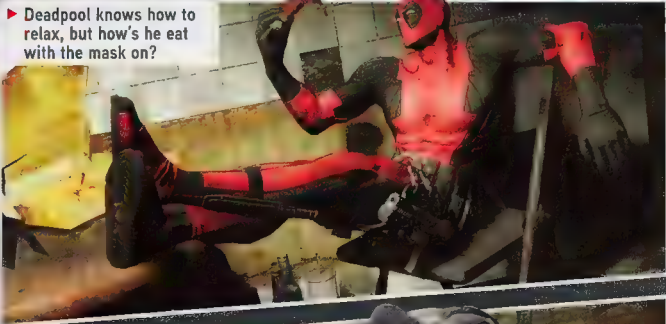
NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!

Though not as funny as Deadpool, *X-Men Origins:*



Wolverine gets just as big a body count in this M-rated movie tie-in.

▶ Deadpool knows how to relax, but how's he eat with the mask on?



▲ Swords are just one type of weapon Deadpool wields. Also, mallets.

BOX A LIP //

Deadpool has quite a collection of weapons at his disposal, from standard swords to Raphael-style sais and comically large mallets. His gun collection is even deeper, including machine guns, auto-matics, and dual-wielded shotguns. But where does he hide it all?

WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Deadpool*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Really seems to understand the character
- ♥ A comic game for (immature) grown-ups
- ♥ Great sense of humor



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Can that humor sustain for an entire game?
- ✗ Is Deadpool funny or just obnoxious?



PRE

► Regardless of which warring faction you side with, you're going to get dirty.

ARMORED CORE: VERDICT DAY

Assembling an AI army • Words: Malt Cabral

Last year's *Armored Core V* revamped the tactical-action mech series' online modes to accommodate large-scale, team-based battles. While reducing other players to smoking piles of scrap was a blast, anyone who lacked a full complement of mech-piloting pals missed out on much of the metal-on-metal fun. The latest entry, *Armored Core: Verdict Day*, aims to remedy this with the innovative UNAC System.

UNACs are highly-customizable AI units capable of filling in for physical players. More than mere bots, though, the whip-smart metallic monsters can hold their own on the battlefield and even improve their tactics over time. You can beef up your squad with multiple computer-controlled mechs or simply recruit a single one to fill an empty slot.

Those who enjoy tinkering and tweaking can also plan on spending

plenty of time customizing these personal terminators; part types (see "Make My Mech," page 39) can be mixed, matched, swapped, and switched in an effort to design the ultimate death-dealing UNAC.

Whether building a bot army in the garage or unleashing it on the battlefield, *Verdict Day*'s UNAC System promises to deliver more depth—and twisted metal—to the *Armored Core* experience. ®



ARMORED CORE: VERDICT DAY

INFO

Publisher: Namco Bandai
Developer: From Software
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Up to 10-player online

GENRE

Action-shooter

SUITABLE FOR

Fans of mech warfare,
building bot armies

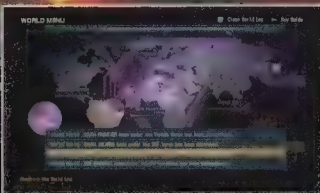
NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!

Dive into last year's *Armored*

Core V for a
sample of the
series' mech-
mashing action.



THE METALLIC MONSTERS CAN IMPROVE THEIR TACTICS OVER TIME



▲ The new World Map gives you a high-level look at previous battles.



▲ Customizing your metallic menaces can be as much fun as piloting them in battle.

CASUAL COMBAT

Armored Core games have always been pretty hardcore, but *Verdict Day* opens its giant metallic arms to newcomers with Operator mode. Rather than jumping right into the fray, rookie recruits can remotely command an entire squad of AI UNACs from a top-down, RTS-flavored perspective. Less intimidating than actually being on the battlefield, Operator mode's a great place for budding pilots to begin.



WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Armored Core: Verdict Day*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ UNACs replace need for physical players
- ♥ Operator mode welcomes newcomers
- ♥ Deep customization options, new parts

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Still pretty hardcore for the uninitiated

PS3 XBOX 360

NHL 14

INFO

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Canada
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE

September 10, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Up to 12-player online and 4-player local

GENRE

Sports

SUITABLE FOR

People dreaming of Gordie Howe Hat Tricks

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



NHL 13 remains a stud, with the best skating mechanics and momentum ever put on the ice.

WANT MORE?
SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *NHL 14*.



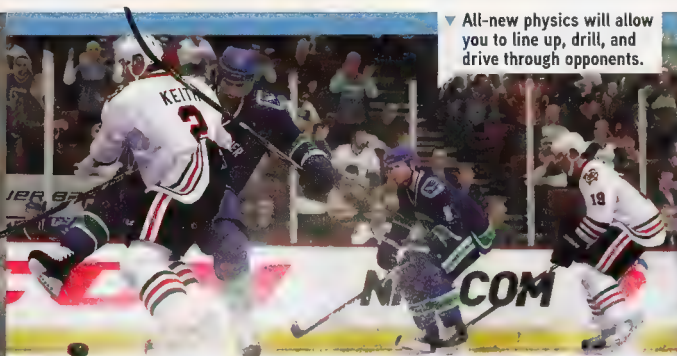
WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Bigger hits translate into a better game
- ♥ Fighting desperately needed an upgrade

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ The voluminous menus get overwhelming
- ✗ Presentation remains fairly similar

GAME DETAILS



▼ All-new physics will allow you to line up, drill, and drive through opponents.

NHL 14

The NIA is built around three primary technology pillars that guide its research efforts and operations. Even as CA Square has rapidly advanced by NIA, the NIA's other pillars, data sharing, with last year's *Translational Research* article, and the NIA's knowledge of the NIA's research efforts, by providing those efforts in order to meet the NIA's needs.

Big time, you connect out of both ends, and you're also connecting to the power. It's a word representing the fact that a flow of energy flows in business, tapping into it, you are tapping it. There are many, many things that, when they're connected to each other, with the flow of information, and an important flow of energy, it's the energy that flows from the power, and it's the power that flows from the power, and it's the power that flows from the power.

Typing is an integral part of the HR, and HR professionals are looking for the people who can do it. For more information, contact us at 800-368-5868.

The roughest sport in the land gets a little meaner

• **Maximum Bidder Estimate**

With the same mix time with the same putty specified in the rest of the spec, and the guys will have made sure the gloves will be removed of course, and they're following from Point Eight a good happy (continued) with size and strength differences, and such, and such, different

improved his own team's performance. Making sure his business segment is profitable is only part of King's and leading executives for Air-Tek's — putting the king on the hockey rink this fall. 



▲ Orders will have ships loaded in five 100-ton weekly shipments to and from Japan.

LESS (CONTROL) IS MORE \\\

The NHL franchise has long been lauded for its simple yet solid controls, and NHL 14 will streamline them even more. Dekes can be executed with a simple tap of the shoulder button and a movement to one side or the other, and superstar players will be able to pull off amazing moves in tight spaces. Defenders can now strafe, though, which will help counteract some of those skilled acts.



Size, strength, and impact points all factor into who wins a battle for the puck.

DUCKTALES REMASTERED



The quack is back • Words: Malt Cabral



★ On top of a visual makeover, the mine cart sequences receive new tracks and alternate routes.

Based on the late-eighties Disney animated series of the same name, *DuckTales* was an 8-bit action-platformer starring Scrooge McDuck and his web-footed nephews Huey, Dewey, and Louie. While gamers who grew up tethered to their Nintendo Entertainment Systems are well aware of its all-time classic status, they may not know the retro favorite's being readied for a current-gen revival.

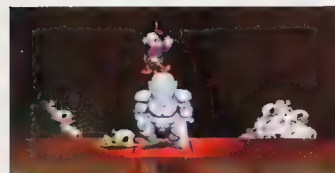
Dubbed *DuckTales Remastered*, the digital release hopes to retain all the NES-era appeal of the original while also prettying it up with a fresh coat of paint. Developed by WayForward Technologies—a studio that's brought fresh life to aging franchises such as *Contra* and *Double Dragon*—*DuckTales* sports a new hand-drawn animated style, complete with detail-drenched backdrops and beautifully rendered characters.

As in the original, you assume the role of a money-grubbing mallard, using his cane to attack enemies and pogo-jump. While the core mechanics remain intact, though, a

number of tweaks promise a more polished experience. The haunted mansion minecart sequence, for example, utilizes more intuitive, interesting layouts, while added scenes and a new tutorial level bring more context to both the story and gameplay.

Recapturing the magic of a beloved classic, without making it look like a dusty relic by contemporary standards, isn't exactly easy. Based on what I've seen, however, *DuckTales Remastered* may have the Midas touch. ☺

IF IT SOUNDS LIKE A DUCK...



★ The globe-trotting Scrooge McDuck will tackle familiar foes with his iconic cane.

GAME DETAILS



DUCKTALES REMASTERED

INFO

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: WayForward Technologies
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii U

RELEASE DATE

Summer 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Platformer

SUITABLE FOR

Fans of 8-bit classics, greedy waterfowl

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



WayForward's *A Boy and His Blob* is another of the studio's successful 8-bit revivals.

WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *DuckTales Remastered*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Beautiful hand-drawn visuals
- ♥ Classic action-platforming play
- ♥ New tutorial and stat-tracking Museum section

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✖ Can it live up to our rose-colored memories?

SHIN MEGAMI
TENSEI IV

INFO

Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Atlus
Platform: 3DS

RELEASE DATE

July 16, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

RPG

SUITABLE FOR

Gamers who wish *Pokémon*
was a lot less cheerful

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!

Collect monsters and explore
dungeons—but
without the M-rated
edge—in *Kingdom
Hearts 3D*.



GAME DETAILS



▼ Can you pass the test
to become a samurai?
(Hint: yes.)

SHIN MEGAMI
TENSEI IV

Days of future past
• Words: Henry Gilbert

You might know *Shin Megami Tensei* better for its slightly-less-niche spin-offs, like *Persona* and *Demon Summoner*, but *Shin Megami Tensei IV* is the JRPG series' first numbered entry in nine years and, as such, a big deal for the cult-favorite franchise. While there's a lot of familiar stuff, like angsty teens navigating a dangerous world filled with demonic mysticism and technology, things are off to a more primitive start in *SMT4*.

The game starts in what seems to be a sprawling, ancient tribal village where young men and women are testing whether they have what it takes to become samurai, the guardians of the town of East Mikado. Your silent protagonist passes and is outfitted with a surprisingly advanced looking

wristband called a COMP. He'll need it in his new life of battling and capturing demons, a life that will be full of hardship.

Shortly after training, the hero enters his first dungeon, a fully 3D area that really puts the 3DS's graphical power through its paces. Each turn-based battle seems standard for the genre, with one major departure: You have the added option of talking to your enemies. Pick your words carefully and the monster may spare you or even join your team; you'll need to get pretty convincing if you want to collect all 400 demons in the game.

SMT4 has a hardcore difficulty to match its classic style, but this long-awaited fourth entry intends to advance the purposefully retro series. ◎

WANT MORE?
SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with
your smartphone to
watch the official trailer
for *Shin Megami
Tensei IV*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- Some of the 3DS's best graphics to date
- A world full of mystery
- Grown-up storytelling

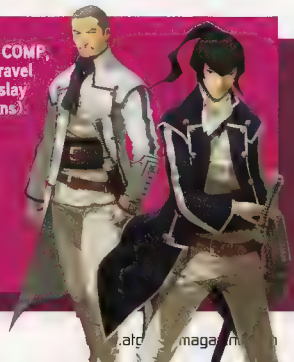
WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- Will the difficulty turn off some players?

NOT ALL IT SEEMS //

The world of *SMT4* seems like a feudal fantasy, which doesn't fit the franchise's previous history. Most games take place in a post-apocalyptic setting where survivors capture demons to help fight over the scraps of a ruined world. There are hints that you'll travel to an eerily empty, post-human version of Tokyo in *SMT4*, but what will you find when you get there?

► Have COMP,
will travel
(and slay
demons).

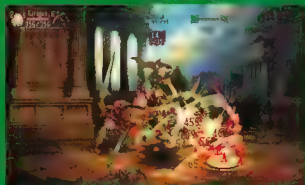


DRAGON'S CROWN

Hack-n-slash fit for royalty • Words: Chris Hoffman

Cut from old-school arcade cloth but stitched together with the modern trappings that only systems like PS3 and PS Vita can provide, *Dragon's Crown* is an action-packed fantasy feast for the senses. Joining forces with up to three other players (local or online), you'll embark on a peril-filled journey through some of the most impressive, hyper-detailed 2D locales of this hardware generation, from grand cities, ancient temples, and crumbling catacombs to lush forests and glistening waterfalls.

Each of the six stunningly animated (and ludicrously proportioned) playable heroes—fighter, elf, dwarf, amazon, wizard, and sorceress—has his or her own unique attacks and abilities (the dwarf can pick up and throw enemies, for example, while the sorceress can turn foes into frogs), and you can customize your characters with items, weapons, special skills, and more. You'll even get to mount wild beasts such as dragons or saber-toothed tigers and use them to maul your adversaries as you explore the realm of Hydeland and attempt to claim the riches hidden in its deadly labyrinths. Light RPG elements such as an experience system blend with the sword-swinging combat to help *Dragon's Crown* breathe new life into the classic side-scrolling hack-n-slash genre. **B**



▲ What the elf lacks in strength she makes up for with her bow skills.



▲ Don't mess with the wizard or he'll roast you to a crisp.

A FRIEND INDEED

Dragon's Crown is likely best enjoyed cooperatively with pals, but even if you're playing solo, you'll never be alone. You're accompanied on your quest by a thief named Rannie, who helps you by unlocking doors and opening treasure chests. You guide Rannie via a right-stick-controlled cursor on PS3, and via touch on Vita.



▲ The amazon must spend a lot of time in the gym. Look at those thighs!

GAME DETAILS



DRAGON'S CROWN

INFO

Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Vanillaware
Platforms: PS3, PS Vita

RELEASE DATE

August 6, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Up to 4-player local or online

GENRE

Action-RPG

SUITABLE FOR

Anyone who loves 2D visuals or vintage action

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!

Dragon's Crown is like a modern Golden Axe, available in Sonic's Ultimate Genesis Collection.



WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Dragon's Crown*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Jaw-droppingly gorgeous graphics and animation
- ♥ Retro-inspired action for up to four players

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ The genre is known for being repetitive
- ✗ Could get frustrating playing alone

XP SEVEN

Built on over 35 years of Turtle Beach audio expertise and designed with the pros at Major League Gaming (MLG), the Ear Force® XP SEVEN isn't your typical gaming headset. The XP SEVEN combines a cutting edge Audio Control Unit to deliver the ultimate surround sound experience with an acoustically tuned headset to any console, PC or Mac. And it's ready for your mobile lifestyle with the included mobile adapter.

SEVEN Pro Gaming Headset

50mm speakers set in acoustically tuned ear cups deliver pristine audio quality while comfortable memory foam ear cushions create a noise-isolating barrier from distractions...like weeping opponents.

Dolby® Digital Surround Sound

Pinpoint the direction of every sound in immersive, 360 degree audio.

Powerful Audio Control Unit (ACU)

The included Audio Control Unit delivers precise, adjustable surround sound, single-touch audio preset switching, independent game and chat volume controls and more for unmatched audio customization.





TURTLE BEACH®

#1 IN GAMING AUDIO



PX22

As an official headset of Major League Gaming, the Ear Force® PX22 amplified stereo headset is sure to take your play to another level with awesome Turtle Beach sound and comfort for hours of play. Plus, it'll work with virtually anything you throw at it: from PlayStation™3 and Xbox 360® to PC, tablets, smartphones, PS Vita™ and more.

PX22 Gaming Headset

50mm speakers deliver awesome audio while comfortable, breathable mesh ear cushions allow you to play for hours on end.

Stream Music

& Take Calls While Gaming

Connect your mobile phone to the inline amp to take phone calls and stream in music while playing.

Redesigned Inline Amplifier

Create the perfect mix of game and chat with independent volume controls and adjustable bass & treble levels.



XP510

To compete with the best players, you need the best equipment. The Ear Force® XP510 gives you the Turtle Beach audio advantage with interference-free, Dual-Band Wi-Fi Wireless and powerful, Dual-Stage Audio Processing for immersive Dolby® Digital Surround Sound. Stream music to your headset via Bluetooth, enjoy incredible theatre audio with the new Movie preset and take your headset anywhere connected to your phone, tablet or portable game system. With up to 15 hours of continuous play from the rechargeable battery, you'll play longer and rise to the top of the leaderboards even faster.

100% Wireless Game & Chat for Xbox 360 & PS3

Enjoy completely wireless freedom for games, chat and console content like music and video.

Dual-Band Wi-Fi

Wireless Technology

Dual-Band Wireless scans for a clear channel ensuring you an interference-free connection.

Dolby® Digital Surround Sound

Pinpoint the direction of every sound in immersive, 360 degree audio.





THIRSTY? ▶

Dracul's back and he's got a hankering for the red sticky stuff.

CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW 2

There will be blood...

• Words: Nick Pino

The banquet room door shudders. Outside, an army of soldiers is waiting to rush into the castle and kill what's left of the once-Knight of the Brotherhood of Light, Gabriel Belmont. Now, engulfed in darkness he is Dracul, the sole Lord of Shadow. As the door gives way, covering the hallway with its splintered remains, he empties the last drop of blood from the sanguine goblet he'd been holding. "Good," he says. "I was getting thirsty."

This was my first demo of the anticipated *Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 2*, and what I saw was both frighteningly impressive and horrifically satisfying. If my chat with MercurySteam co-founder Enric Alvarez is any indication, getting to this point wasn't all sunshine and rainbows. But in a series so steeped in blood, combat, and family feuds, I would hardly think there was any other way. Still, Alvarez didn't have me fly nearly 6,000 miles from San Francisco to the team's headquarters outside of Madrid, Spain, to tell me that Drac's story was going to be good. He told me how it's going to be the best. "Of course," he says, "this is a matter of opinion."

I'll admit, in the 20 minutes of gameplay that took me from Drac's inner sanctum to the castle precipices, even up past the walking, battle arena-sized Siege Titan, I never saw *Castlevania*

completely shake the all-too-easy God of War comparison that haunted the first *Lords of Shadow* game. What I did see, though, was an improvement in every single way over the original. A 360-degree camera replaces the staunch fixed-camera perspective, making it easier than ever to appreciate the game's unearthly ambience. More impressive, however, was the platforming that took place through the game's gothic environments—moves

that will put the *Uncharted* and *Assassin's Creed* series to shame. It's the combat that series producer Dave Cox wanted to be the primary focus when making *Lords of Shadow 2*.

"We want people to feel the depth of the combat. We want them to feel the

strategy by using the tools that we give them," Cox explained. "We're going to give you lots of toys to play with in combat, so please use them."

"It's blood, though, that is basically what will fuel your abilities." The original never gave me a reason to believe otherwise, but it was this line from Cox that made me realize that *Lords of Shadow 2* wasn't going to be a light-hearted follow-up to the first game. It's understandable, though, because *LoS2* looks to be the team's last entry in the trilogy. "I've said this in a few interviews now, but this is going to be the last story that we tell in this universe." ☺

LORDS OF
SHADOW 2 IS AN
IMPROVEMENT IN
EVERY WAY OVER
THE ORIGINAL

◀ OLD

This medieval village is a great example of the series' historical roots.

NEW VS. OLD

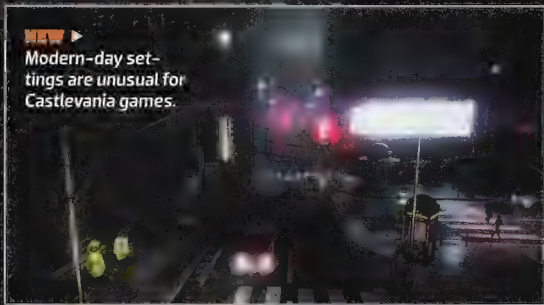
Welcome to the dawning of a new age for the Castlevania series.

Though the game isn't specific regarding its timeline, the story starts out some time after *Mirror of Fate*, and then leaps forward to the present day. Like a sci-fi-spun Western, Dracula's been drawn out of centuries of hiding to stop the resurrected outlaw Satan from bringing about the Apocalypse. And from what Cox hinted at, it appears that it's up to Drac to make a pact with his old ally-turned-betrayer Zobek (again voiced by the venerable Patrick Stewart) to stop the world from ending.

But before we get to a time with eBay and indoor plumbing, Cox said you should prepare to spend a bit of time not invading Drac's castle, but defending it. "The castle will almost be a character in itself—it's a creature of chaos. Dracula will actually have to overcome the trials of his castle if he wants to move forward." Of course, the Belmont clan (the vampire-hunting family Dracula once belonged to) won't let him go that easily. While I only caught a brief glimpse of Drac's vampiric progeny Alucard in the fading shots of my demo, chances are good that the blood-suckers will go toe-to-toe against the Belmont clan...and each other.

NEW ▶

Modern-day settings are unusual for Castlevania games.



PLATFORMING

For being a rapidly aging creature of the night, Dracula has some moves that would give even the spry Ezio Auditore and Nathan Drake a run for their money. During my demo I got to see Drac use his blood whip to hook distant platforms and, at one point, even show off a bit of the game's revamped combat while he fought to climb the castle's outer walls. The team at MercurySteam has worked extra hard to keep players from getting lost by giving him a sort of non-invasive sixth sense that you trigger to highlight your path when you get stuck.

COMBAT REVAMPED

The face of war has forever been changed...for the better.

Sure, it's pretty, but the game's graphics weren't the only aspect of *Lords of Shadow* to get a complete overhaul. LoS2 raises the bar for combat in the series, incorporating the necessity of evasive rolls and counter-blocking from the first game, and a better all-around diversity of enemies that force you to change tactics on the fly.

Take the two basic types of soldiers: a heavy, shield-bearing warrior and the more offensive-based two-handed sword variety. While the latter just needs a mix of effective dodging and timing to take out, the former actually requires switching over to Chaos Claws (see "The Armory" sidebar) to rend free that big hunk of metal that they hold.

Like in the original, quick, decisive strikes open these soldiers up for a finishing blow, delivered via quick-time event. Every enemy you take

down in this way adds to Drac's focus bar (also introduced in the first *Lords of Shadow* game) eventually producing magic-generating orbs that fuel the two upgradeable schools of spells Dracula has at his disposal, void and chaos. Cox said by playing well and filling your focus bar, you'll be able to start unlocking more sections of a proposed skill-tree system that the team hadn't quite finished when I saw the game. If you just spam the direct attack button, Cox said, you'll never get a chance to see everything Drac can do.

Magic, it seems, will play a vital role in combat—directly fueling which weapons you'll be able to use, and in turn affecting how quickly you'll be able to take out baddies. "We're very serious about making this a combat game," Cox said. "We really want players to think about what they're doing and not just mash buttons."

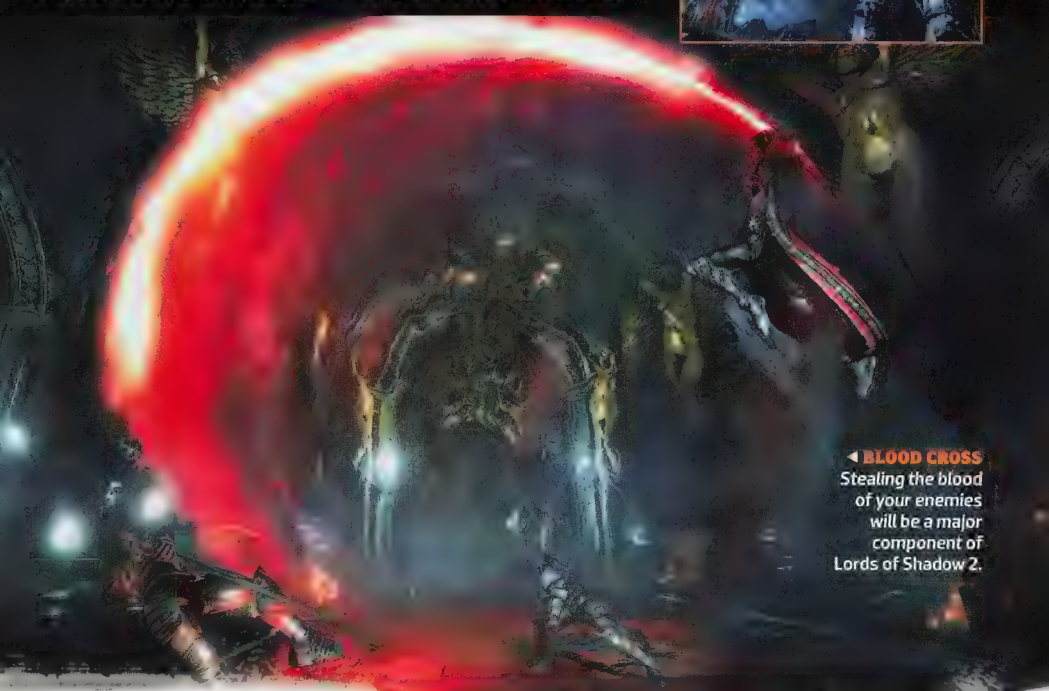
TITAN

Remember the titans? Those monstrous, hulking pieces of arcana that Gabriel climbed *Shadow of the Colossus* style to bring down in *Lords of Shadow*? Yep, they're back and bigger than ever. The Titan I saw, appropriately called the Siege Titan, was about 10 times the size they were before. Besides being a big, bad stage boss, the Titan served as a battle arena and intricate platforming exposition before Drac got to the top and pulled its plug. After watching the epic first encounter, I can't wait to bring one down for myself. You know what they say...the bigger they are, the harder they fall.



BLOOD CROSS

Stealing the blood of your enemies will be a major component of *Lords of Shadow 2*.





ENRIC ALVAREZ, MERCURYTEAM CO-FOUNDER

So, for us the important thing is that many, many people understood, accepted, and enjoyed *Lords of Shadow*, otherwise we wouldn't be here.

heavily redesign the engine. The old one was just not suited for the task.

How do you balance pleasing old-school Castlevania fans and doing enough to get new fans interested in the series?

All we do is try to do our best. We chose this [action-oriented] approach to *Castlevania*, because we felt that we could make a much, much better game by doing an adventure where combat was the main component. What we do now is the best. Of course, this is a matter of opinion. It's impossible to please everyone, though, and you are in the wrong industry if you believe you won't be criticized and praised in equal shares.

What was your inspiration for taking the series from its medieval roots to the modern world?

We thought that would be unexpected. We make story-driven games, really, and story-wise this felt natural. The story is leading us to modern days and I promise you that this is going to feel natural. It's going to feel interesting...challenging even.

What do you think will be the first change gamers will notice when they start a new game?

I'd say the engine. To accommodate more organic exploration and the 360-degree camera, we had to

Is combat really going to be that much different from the original?

Yes, absolutely. Playing *Lords of Shadow 2* and just going through button-mashing is like playing *Gears of War* without taking cover. You can do it—trust me, you can do it—but it doesn't make much sense. So, it's exactly the same type of thing here.

Mirror of Fate introduced some old characters in a new setting. How is LoS2 going to integrate some of the changes in the timeline from LoS: Mirror of Fate?

I think in this question lies one of the most attractive aspects of the game. You don't want me to spoil the ending for you, do you?



DAVE COX, CASTLEVANIA SERIES PRODUCER

What was your reaction when you got the greenlight to re-launch the Castlevania series?

I was absolutely floored. It was really an ["oh, shoot"] moment in my life. I knew we had taken on an important part of history...we just didn't want to disappoint fans of the series.

How did you even begin planning this story back in 2009?

When we started to tell Dracula's story, we thought, "where does this end?" You naturally think of the end when you start thinking about a beginning—and you don't really

think about what goes in between. We weren't in agreement at first, but we knew we wanted to tell Dracula's story. That was the reason for LoS in the first place. I think *Lords of Shadow 1* and *Lords of Shadow 2* are really the beginning and the end of the story. There's really no filler.

What was the biggest criticism you took into account when making Lords of Shadow 2?

The linear aspects of [the original.] I hope you're going to want to look around and go back, but it's on us to give you guys a reason to do that. We never want you to feel like you're loading level after level and you're playing a linear game. I hope you'll see a grate, wonder what it's for, and when you get the Mist ability, go back and find out what's on the other side.

But seriously, what's going to happen to gamers who are stuck in their button-mashing ways?

We see videos on YouTube with people just spamming the button and complaining how long it takes to kill enemies. If they don't play this game properly, we're going to punish them.

You've said before that this is the end of the trilogy, but is this really the end of the Lords of Shadow series?

At the end of this game, I promise we're going to answer all of the questions and everything is going to fit. If you've played the entire trilogy, *Lords of Shadow 2* is going to be a very satisfying end to the series. That's what we want to deliver. Everything will be totally clear...we don't want to leave people hanging.



THE CHAOS CLAWS ▶
are vital to breaking
tough enemy defenses.

THE ARMORY

While Drac's a bit rusty from his time spent being MIA, his armory is not. He's equipped with a trinity of deadly arms to help him stop the end of the world. A variation of the Combat Cross, Drac's Blood Whip will be his primary way to take down opponents and will act as a conduit for using his blood-based powers. But it's the Void Sword (see below) and the Chaos Claws (see above) that will really turn

the tide of battle for Dracula. The sword dishes out a fair bit of hurt in no time flat and will actually recoup parts of Drac's health bar with every strike—effectively replacing the purpose of light magic from the original *Lords of Shadow*. On the other hand are the Chaos Claws. These slow-but-brutal gauntlets break through tough enemy defenses, and when combined with the other two make for a mean combo chain.



**@GAMER
XTRA**

In @GAMER's digital edition, you'd be able to play an audio clip from *Castlevania: LoS2* here.

◀ **THE VOID SWORD**
Like in *Mirror of Fate*, the Void Sword will restore any health you lost in combat.

PS3 XBOX360 PC

GAME DETAILS



RATING RECOMMENDATION
RP
RATED FOR PARENTS
STRONG PARENTAL GUIDANCE
SUGGESTED
PS3

**CASTLEVANIA:
LORDS OF SHADOW 2**

INFO

Publisher: Konami
Developer: MercurySteam
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Action-adventure

SUITABLE FOR

Insatiable action-adventure fans and anyone backing Drac

NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



God of War 3 is the inspiration for *LoS2*'s gritty, hack-n-slash action, a brutal good time.

WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Castlevania: LoS2*.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Drac's new and improved weapons and combat mechanics
- ♥ *LoS*' absolutely intense platforming sequences
- ♥ Did I mention you get to play as Dracula?



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✕ Kratos...is that you?



OUR MOST ANTICIPATED GAMES OF E3

WORDS: @GAMER STAFF

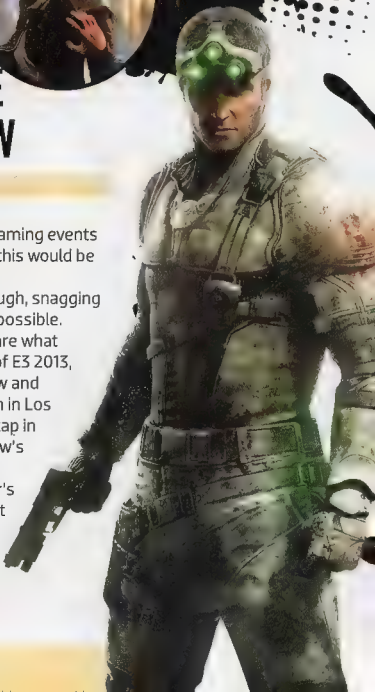
THE GAMES WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE AT THE INDUSTRY'S BIGGEST SHOW

The Electronic Entertainment Expo is a magical time. Sure, as gamers we have our disagreements, but E3 is that brief respite where we can sit side by side, enthralled by the biggest names in the industry showing us exactly where we're going to sink the next year of our lives. Between all the industry-leader keynotes, sneak peeks into the future of gaming at closed-door demos, and exciting, eye-popping action on the showroom floor, this is a gamer's mecca.

There's always a lot of hype around the convention, and this year's no different. E3 2013 will reveal the future of gaming by giving members of the media a more magnified look at this fall's biggest systems: Sony's PS4 and

Microsoft's next-gen Xbox. If gaming events were a season of Madden NFL, this would be the Super Bowl.

Just like the Super Bowl, though, snagging 50-yardline tickets is nearly impossible. That's why you've got us. Here are what we expect to be the highlights of E3 2013, with the details we already know and the info we're expecting to learn in Los Angeles. Watch out for a full recap in our July/August issue—the show's biggest surprises, the staff's favorite moments, and the floor's craziest sights and sounds—but until then, this is the best way to get yourself up to speed before you get left in last-generation's pixel dust. ☉



ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

Publisher: Ubisoft • Developer: Ubisoft Montreal •
Release Date: October 29, 2013

WHAT WE KNOW...

The Assassin's Creed series is one of those rare successful perennials...and, like clockwork, we're prepping for another this fall. Ubisoft freshens things up with each installment, and AC4 continues that by putting a strong focus on boat battling—which offers more encounters with real-history characters, such as Blackbeard. Still, its story intertwines with previous games: The main protagonist is Edward Kenway, which makes him grandfather to AC3's Connor. (Thankfully, it takes place well before he became Connor's grandfather, so AC4's gameplay won't involve arthritic parkour.)

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Since Ubisoft introduced the naval gameplay to us in AC3, we're curious how much "assassins at sea" is too much? (For some, AC3's naval gameplay was too much.)

BEYOND: TWO SOULS

Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Quantic Dream •
Release Date: August 8, 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

Following Jodie, a girl with the power to channel and speak to a spirit named Aiden, Beyond: Two Souls is game designer David Cage's follow-up to 2010's Heavy Rain. Actors Ellen Page and Willem Dafoe help bring the 2,000-page script to life, with the former playing Jodie as both a child and young adult.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

How much time are we going to spend tied up in quick-time events versus learning more about this compelling story?

INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Sucker Punch •
Release Date: TBA



WHAT WE KNOW...

It's been seven years since Cole McGrath's superpowered heroics. Now it's Delsin Rowe's turn. A 24-year-old native of Seattle, Delsin finds himself in the epicenter of a war against mutants. It's up to him to either set the country straight once and for all...or burn his city to the ground.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Will Second Son be a launch-day title for the PS4 or is it slated for sometime later during an ambiguous "launch window?"



BATTLEFIELD 4

Publisher: Electronic Arts • Developer: DICE •
Release Date: Fall 2013

WHAT WE KNOW...

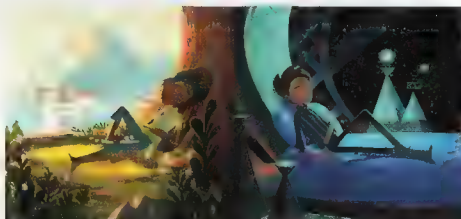
Single-player is getting a major overhaul and will most likely pull more from *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*'s bag of narrative tricks rather than *Battlefield 3*'s ephemeral offerings. Sandbox destruction is back and better than ever—debris scatters everywhere with each ear-drum-shattering explosion. Without getting our hands on it, though, it's tough to tell which parts of the "Fishing in Baku" demo (shown at GDC) are actual game-play, and what's little more than smoke and mirrors.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

What's real anymore? And, more importantly, what will next-gen consoles mean for our favorite multiplayer modes?

BROKEN AGE

Publisher: Double Fine Productions • Developer: Double Fine Productions • Release Date: TBA 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

This game's a real labor of love. Fans of Tim Schafer's point-and-click adventures (his last, *Grim Fandango*, was in 1998) were willing to donate over \$3 million on Kickstarter to help make another. The result, a story of two heroes in two worlds—one fantasy and one sci-fi—sounds magical.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Is *Broken Age* merely a throwback to the golden age of point-and-click, or will it reinvent and reinvigorate the genre?

DISNEY INFINITY

Publisher: Disney Interactive • Developer: Avalanche Software •
Release Date: August 18, 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

It's basically *Skylanders*, but instead of Spyro, you'll scan Disney characters, props, and sets from film and television into the game. Want to play as Buzz Lightyear driving Cinderella's carriage in *Alice's Wonderland*? That's totally possible with the right combo of collectible figures and power discs.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Disney now owns both Marvel and Star Wars. Will those universes make any kind of appearance in *Infinity*? Yes, please.



WISH FOR SPEED

It's a well-known fact that I love me a good *NFS* game, and I keep going back to last year's *Most Wanted* reboot for more thrills. I can't wait to see what EA and Criterion are putting under the hood of the next game.

NOTE-TO-ALEX

Developer Gearbox has had some ups and down in recent years (*Aliens: Colonial Marines*, anyone?), but the *Borderlands* franchise is going strong. Even though Gearbox and 2K are still releasing *Borderlands 2* DLC, I'm curious where they're going next.

DARK SOULS II

Publisher: Namco Bandai • Developer: From Software • Release Date: TBA 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

It's going to be hard. Not a little tough or slightly challenging—we're talking about soul-crushing, white-knuckle inducing difficulty that will have you in tears by the time the credits roll around. But a new engine and revamped death animations mean the time watching your character die will be well spent.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

What's the new ingredient in From Software's secret sauce? Is player-versus-player multiplayer on the menu?

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Guerrilla Games • Release Date: Q4 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

First-person shooters have become staples on game consoles, so it's no surprise that Sony would plan to have a new Killzone title ready for when the PS4 launches at the end of this year. It'll also push the story forward, with *Shadow Fall* taking place 30 years after the events of *Killzone 3*.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

What will be the effect of going with a different gameplay venue than *Helghast*? Will the planet Vekta hold any secrets?

BATMAN: ARKHAM ORIGINS

Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment • Developer: Warner Bros. Games Montreal • Release Date: October 25, 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

As the title suggests, this is a prequel to *Arkham Asylum* and *Arkham City*. Batman's a younger hero, with little experience fighting super villains, when Black Mask and Deathstroke target him for an introductory lesson one snowy Christmas Eve. Luckily, he's already developed his trusty gadgets, including new additions like a Remote Claw, holographic crime-scene recreation, and fast travel via Batwing. Gotham's less rundown in this earlier incarnation, too, so expect more vertical gameplay up and down the glittering skyscrapers of downtown.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

How will the absence of developer Rocksteady, writer Paul Dini, and voice actor Kevin Conroy affect the experience?

RESPAWN & SPAWNY

Hey, remember three years ago when the guys who started *Infinity Ward* (*Call of Duty*) had a bad break-up with Activision and started a new studio named Respawn (with much time spent in courtrooms along the way)? Yeah, I'd like to see what they've been working on...

THIS IS MY TOEJAM

In 1992, SEGA brought out a funky, funny action game on the Genesis console called *ToeJam & Earl*, featuring a pair of eccentric extraterrestrials. It even inspired two sequels. I'm going on a limb here, but I think the next-gen gaming world might just be ready for a fresh TJ&E adventure. I am.



KNACK

Publisher: SCEA • Developer: WWS Japan Studio
Release Date: TBA



WHAT WE KNOW...

Mark Cerny, the PS4's lead architect, is also heading up development of a new brand—an action-platformer that centers on “a creature with mysterious powers,” which is constructed from ancient relics and can add others to vary its abilities.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Given that it's being overseen by the PS4's designer, will Knack be a showcase of the forthcoming console's fresh features?

LIGHTNING RETURNS: FINAL FANTASY XIII

Publisher: Square Enix • Developer: Square Enix
Release Date: Fall 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

Lightning Returns is an unexpected departure for the series. Combat will be quicker, there will only be one playable character (Lightning, duh!), and you'll have a time limit of 13 days before the game ends, Majora's Mask-style.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Don't panic. While changing FFXIII's time-tested formula makes us uneasy, will this be the shake-up the series needed?

METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

Publisher: Konami • Developer: Kojima Productions • Release Date: TBA



WHAT WE KNOW...

When we got our first look at Metal Gear Solid V, it was a real enigma—and in many ways, nothing has changed. Originally shown as *The Phantom Pain* at Spike's 2012 Video Game Award ceremony, Metal Gear Solid V is actually a prequel to the eponymous PS1 classic, Metal Gear Solid. Where contention arises however, is whether Kojima is involved with two games (*The Phantom Pain* and *MGS: Ground Zeroes*) or just one. While the @GAMER jury is still out on this matter, what we do know is that David Hayter, the voice of Snake for the better part of two decades, will not reprise his role as Snake for either(?) game.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Kojima, just how many games are you making? And what about PS4/Xbox 720 support? We want some answers!

CHARLIE'S
WISH LIST



FINAL FANTASY XIV

At the PS4 reveal in February, Square Enix's Shinji Hashimoto told us the company was working on a “Final Fantasy title” and to “please be excited for E3 this year.” Despite his cruel and infuriating ambiguity, I will be.

UNCHARTED 4

With the next PlayStation just a few months away, what better time to announce the inevitable return of one of Sony's favorite sons? Of course, developer Naughty Dog's a bit busy releasing *The Last of Us* during E3 week, but I'm sure they can multitask.

THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

Publisher: CD Projekt RED • Developer: CD Projekt RED •
Release Date: TBA 2014



WHAT WE KNOW...

Wild Hunt is going to be the Game of Thrones of next-generation videogames. A series full of political intrigue, blatant sexuality, and superbly written story arcs, The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt will likely be the final chapter in the Geralt of Rivia saga.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Will we need an accompanying appendix to make sense of the third game's incredibly involved open world?

MURDERED: SOUL SUSPECT

Publisher: Square Enix • Developer: TBA •
Release Date: 2014



WHAT WE KNOW...

Nothing certain, as only a teaser trailer's released so far. Guessing from those 30 seconds, you play a hard-boiled detective who must solve his own murder. You may or may not have gained ghostly superpowers in the process of dying.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Is this a puzzler like Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective, an adventure like Beyond: Two Souls, or something totally unique?

PORTAL 3

Hey, a man can dream... While the folks at Valve seem admirably averse to repeating themselves, and suffer a particular allergy to the number "3" (miss you, Gordon!), the science-gone-wrong story of Portal won't feel 100% finished until I've finally rescued GLaDOS from herself.



WATCH DOGS

Publisher: Ubisoft • Developer: Ubisoft Montreal •
Release Date: November 19, 2013

WHAT WE KNOW...

If Niko Bellic was really, really good with computers, you'd have an idea of what to expect from Watch Dogs, Ubisoft's new open-worlder starring a hacker vigilante named Aiden Pearce. In an alternate Chicago where everything is connected through data, you can accomplish almost anything with a few taps on your phone: from the innocent, like switching the music played over a mall's speakers, to the not-so-innocent, like emptying a pedestrian's bank account or messing with a traffic light to cause accidents. Facial recognition and probability software even allow you to prevent crimes before they're committed.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Multiplayer is confirmed, but so are "seamless" blends of multiplayer and single-player. That sounds intriguing.

THE LAST GUARDIAN

After four years of delays, it's hard to know whether this game from the makers of Ico and Shadow of the Colossus is even still in development. But if lowbrow vaporware like Duke Nukem Forever can finally become reality, here's hoping that potentially powerful art like this can, too.

DESTINY

Publisher: Activision • Developer: Bungie • Release Date: TBD



WHAT WE KNOW...

If you say "Bungie" to many gamers, the only thing that comes to mind is "Halo." Now that it has handed the Halo reins off to Microsoft and 343, its next challenge is a 10-year contract with Activision, the first title being *Destiny*. Though we haven't seen gameplay (yet), the discussion makes it sound like a blended concoction that's equal parts solo campaign and MMO-ish multiplayer co-op in space. If the past is any indication, Bungie will soundly rock our virtual worlds.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

How is Bungie interweaving multiplayer interaction into the world so it won't interfere with your campaign gameplay?

POKEMON X & Y

Publisher: Nintendo, The Pokemon Company • Developer: Game Freak • Release Date: October 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

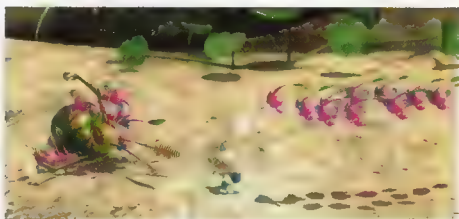
We're getting two new legendaries in the form of Xerneas and Yveltal (get it, X and Y?) and a new Eeveelution in the form of Sylveon. Beyond that, we know the names of the three starters and that we're not getting 150 new monsters to catch—so far, 22 pokémon are confirmed to reappear from prior games.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Are the rumors of a new "fairy"-type true? Can Pokémon keep its monster-catching formula going for another 10 years?

PIKMIN 3

Publisher: Nintendo • Developer: Nintendo EAD • Release Date: August 4, 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

Has it really been nine years since *Pikmin 2* hit the GameCube? Well, then...I guess that makes us more than overdue for a new one. The next chapter promises more of the colorful, creature-filled worlds—and more challenges in using different-colored Pikmin to get you deeper into the world and take out baddies.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Nintendo first said it'd ship by the end of March, then changed that to "the first half of the year." Why the double delay?



343 AND AGE OF INQUISITION

BioWare and EA have been strangely quiet about this brand lately. We know a third entry is in development, but not when we'll see it or what platforms it will release on. If this lasts much longer, I may start my own inquisition.

HALO 5

Putting *Halo 5* on my wish list is like asking the sun to rise tomorrow morning. Yes, I know it's going to happen—and, no, that doesn't make me any less excited for it. *Halo 4* left more questions than answers, but this is one space opera I'll never grow out of.

TEARAWAY

Publisher: Sony Computer
Entertainment Europe • Developer:
Media Molecule • Release Date:
October 22, 2013



WHAT WE KNOW...

The creators of the crafty, whimsical, and interactive *LittleBigPlanet* are taking those adjectives to new extremes with this Vita platformer. It's set in a world of paper that you can reach into and transform with godlike fingers via the rear touchpad.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

Not everyone's a fan of DIY. Will *Tearaway* include a compelling story and characters, or require you to imagine your own?

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA (3DS)

Publisher: Nintendo • Developer: Nintendo •
Release Date: TBD



WHAT WE KNOW...

This 3DS game will be based in the *Link to the Past* universe from more than two decades ago, with a mostly top-down viewpoint. However, in an interesting twist, you'll be able to flatten yourself against walls and sneak into areas that you can't reach in your full-body form. *Paper Zelda*?

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...

What will it be called? *Link to the Past 2* would be too boring—*Zelda* games need names with flair. Or will it be *Paper Zelda*?

SUPER SMASH BROS. U

Nintendo's skipping a keynote this year, which could put the publisher at a disadvantage compared to PlayStation and Microsoft. Then again, all that extra time not worrying about the big stage may be spent actually showing us the future of the Wii U, starting with this dream sequel.

SEE INSIDE FOR THESE GAMES

CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW 2

Publisher: Konami • Developer: MercurySteam •
Release Date: Fall 2013 • See more on pg. 46

LEGO MARVEL SUPER HEROES

Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive • Developer: TT Games •
Release Date: Fall 2013 • See more on pg. 30

SAINTS ROW IV

Publisher: Deep Silver • Developer: Volition, Inc. •
Release Date: August 20, 2013 • See more on pg. 26

THIEF

Publisher: Square-Enix • Developer: Eidos Montreal •
Release Date: TBA 2014 • See more on pg. 18

SPLINTER CELL BLACKLIST

Publisher: Ubisoft • Developer: Ubisoft Toronto •
Release Date: August 20, 2013 •
Flashback: You can read more about *Splinter Cell Blacklist* in the *@GAMER* Issue #29 (May '13) cover story.

DON'T MISS THESE GAMES

BAYONETTA 2

Publisher: Nintendo • Developer: Platinum Games •
Release Date: TBA

Sometimes stringent development budgets make odd bedfellows. *Bayonetta 2* and Nintendo is one such case.

CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

Publisher: Activision • Developer: Infinity Ward •
Release Date: November 5, 2013
Ghosts will be Infinity Ward's first non-Modern Warfare *Call of Duty* in the better part of a decade.

DEEP DOWN

Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Capcom •
Release Date: TBA 2013
Shown briefly at the PS4 reveal event, Capcom's fantasy RPG is leading the charge for next-gen battle mages.

THE WITNESS

Developer: Jonathan Blow • Release Date: TBA 2013
Braid is a tough act to follow—but *The Witness*, a new puzzle game by Jonathan Blow, hopes to do just that.

THE WOLF AMONG US

Publisher: Telltale Games • Developer: Telltale Games •
Release Date: TBA 2013
Taken straight from the pages of Bill Willingham's comic series, *The Wolf Among Us* will be released in an episodic format much like last year's *The Walking Dead*.

AROUND THE WORLD

Words: David Wolinsky

From The Mushroom Kingdom to Shadow Moses Island, games have always excelled at allowing us to explore completely made-up places. But they also let us adventure through real ones without the need for a current passport. Consider this a travel guide to those touristy gaming experiences. 



L.A. NOIRE:
LOS ANGELES, USA
Between pit stops at crime scenes, all of 1947 Los Angeles is your playground.

METAL GEAR RISING: REVENGEANCE:
GUADALAJARA, MEXICO
Though most of your time is spent in scenic Mexican sewers, your entry point in Mexico is lovely downtown Guadalajara.

WATCH DOGS:
CHICAGO, USA
Patrol Chicago's famous Loop area for futuristic crimes, but don't forget to visit the theaters!

ASSASSIN'S CREED III:
BOSTON, USA

You'll meet historical figures, shop for dry goods, enjoy coffee and... you know, spill some Templar blood.



MAX PAYNE 3:
SAO PAULO, BRAZIL
Nightclubs, football (soccer) stadiums, a bus depot, and docks are on the itinerary as the grizzled, vice-ridden detective.

CONSPIRACY
 In 1952, Soviet spies
 tried to assassinate
 King George VI and
 Queen Elizabeth II.
 Buckingham Palace can
 tell you more about
 the incident.

METAL 2011
 The legendary, deranged, and
 terrifying Metal 2011
 is now Mother Russia.

UNINHABITED 2
 In the second game,
 you'll explore the
 ruins of ancient
 temples are yours for the
 taking.

SLEEPING DOGS:
 HONG KONG, CHINA
 Hong Kong's seedy under-
 belly is on full display here.
 Cockfighting, street fights,
 and insurance fraud are a
 typical night out.



BURNING RING
 In the second game,
 you'll explore the
 ruins of ancient
 temples are yours for the
 taking.

SSX:
 KILIMANJARO, TANZANIA
 Armed with a snowboard and a
 flashlight, you'll careen down the
 colossal African volcano.

BURNING RING
 In the second game,
 you'll explore the
 ruins of ancient
 temples are yours for the
 taking.

FAR CRY 3: MALAY
 ARCHIPELAGO,
 INDONESIA
 Hijack trucks, climb
 radio towers, and fight
 off rabid dogs—all are
 possible with a gorgeous
 tropical backdrop!

GAMES THAT SLIPPED THROUGH THE CRACKS

Your last chance to snag these illusive titles

• Words: Nathan Meunier

As the current console generation winds down, it's the perfect time to dig through that pile of overlooked games you might've missed the first time. Trust us, these games are worth the extra effort. ©





EL SHADDAI: ASCENSION OF THE METATRON



Publisher: Ignition Entertainment Developer: Ignition Tokyo
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 Genre: Action ESRB: T



DARK SOULS



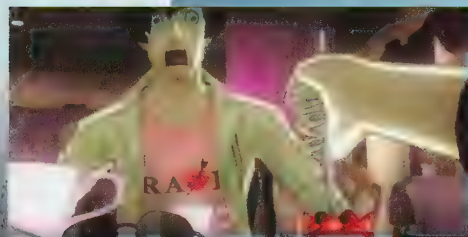
Publisher: Namco Bandai Games Developer: From Software
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 Genre: Action-RPG ESRB: M



NI NO KUNI: WRATH OF THE WHITE WITCH



Publisher: Namco Bandai Games Developer: Level-5
Platforms: PS3 Genre: RPG ESRB: Everyone 10+

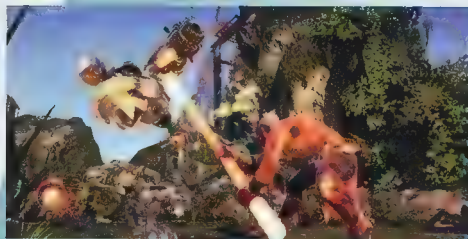


CATHERINE



Publisher: Atlus Developer: Atlus Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 Genre: Puzzle-Platformer ESRB: M

...and a love triangle. Catherine is a puzzle-platformer that's as much about solving puzzles as it is about solving a love triangle. The game is a surreal, dreamlike journey through a series of increasingly difficult puzzles, each representing a different aspect of the player's relationship with the two women. The game is a masterpiece of storytelling and gameplay, and it's a must-play for anyone who loves a good puzzle and a good love story.



ENSLAVED: ODYSSEY TO THE WEST



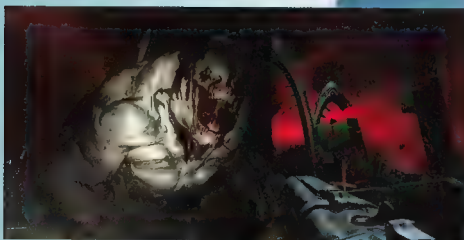
Publisher: Namco Bandai Developer: Ninja Theory
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 Genre: Action-Adventure
ESRB: T



GOLDENEYE 007: RELOADED



Publisher: Activision Developer: Eurocom Entertainment
Software Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 Genre: First-
Person Shooter ESRB: T



DOOM 3 BFG EDITION



Publisher: Bethesda Softworks Developer: id Software
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC Genre: First-Person Shooter
ESRB: M

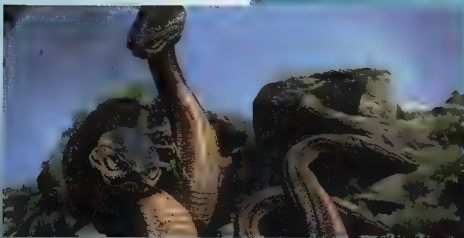


DRAGON'S DOGMA



Publisher: Capcom Developer: Capcom
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 Genre: Action-RPG
ESRB: M

one of the most spectacular bestiaries you'll find in the genre. Its insane battles often unfold in the least predictable of ways, delivering lots of variety as you quest across the land with your gaggle of warrior minions in tow.



BULLETSTORM'S SKILL-BASED KILLING SYSTEM PUSHES THE HOMICIDAL ENVELOPE IN CRAZY WAYS



BULLETSTORM

Publisher: EA • Developer: People Can Fly •
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC • Genre: First-Person
Shooter • ESRB: M

 Bulletstorm wears its crass attitude like a badge of honor, spewing endless profanity to match its constant deluge of hot lead. Edginess aside, this action-packed sci-fi shooter really shines with its inventive skill-based killing system that spurs you to push the homicidal envelope in crazy ways.



MAJIN AND THE FORSAKEN KINGDOM

 Publisher: Namco Bandai Games • Developer: Game Republic •
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 • Genre: Action-Adventure, Puzzle • ESRB: T

The relationship between a man and his giant, furry beastie puts a heartwarming spin on this exuberant story-driven adventure game. Working together to overcome puzzles and defeat foes requires a combination of your brain and your companion's brawn.



BINARY DOMAIN

 Publisher: Sega • Developer: Sega • Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC • Genre: Third-Person Shooter • ESRB: M

Robots wearing suits of human flesh. In games, rarely does it get any more insane than this, save for the fact that you're the crew sent in to hunt them down. Binary Domain takes you on a sci-fi-heavy robot killing spree alongside a trusty—and at times even likable—squad of future soldiers. By the time the credits roll, only piles of dead circuitry will be left in your wake.



KILLZONE TRILOGY

 Publisher: SCE • Developer: Guerrilla Games •
Platforms: PS3 • Genre: First-Person Shooter • ESRB: M

Three Killzones are always better than one, and this hefty package of eerie shooting mayhem is just the thing for anyone who missed out the first time around. Battling space Nazis with all manner of high-tech gun and gadgetry doesn't get old across this trio of trigger-happy jaunts full of gunmetal greatness. And who doesn't love a good jetpack battle to cap off the day's fight?

HOMEFRONT SHOWCASES THE HORRORS OF WAR IN SURPRISING WAYS



HOMEFRONT



Publisher: THQ Developer: Kaos Studios Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC Genre: First-Person Shooter ESRB: M

TWO WORLDS II



Publisher: TopWare Interactive Developer: Reality Pump Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC Genre: RPG ESRB: M



SNIPER ELITE V2



Publisher: 505 Games Developer: Rebellion Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii U, PC Genre: Third-Person Shooter ESRB: M



SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED



Publisher: EA Developer: Grasshopper Manufacture Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 Genre: Third-Person Shooter ESRB: M

Granted to be one of the strangest (if not the most) in the annals of Hell you'll ever encounter, *Shadows of the Damned* is a must-play, at least for its sheer weirdness and unapologetically adult themes. Crude jokes, warped humor, and tons of crazy guns are layered onto this gruesome-but-stylish horror adventure.

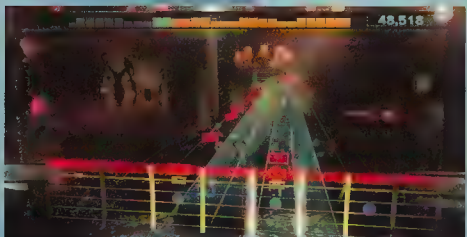




SINGULARITY



Publisher: Activision Developer: Raven Software
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC Genre: First-Person
Shooter ESRB: M



ROCKSMITH



Publisher: Ubisoft Developer: Ubisoft San Francisco
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC Genre: Rhythm
ESRB: T



LEGO ROCK BAND



Publisher: Warner Bros. Games Developer: Harmonix Music
Systems Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, DS Genre: Rhythm
ESRB: Everyone 10+



R.U.S.E.



Publisher: Ubisoft Developer: Eugen Systems
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC, Mac Genre: Real-time
Strategy ESRB: T

Following your opponent's war strategy tactics can be a crucial ingredient for winning the war, but R.U.S.E. gleefully takes this several steps further to great effect. Adding a bevy of traps and tomfoolery to the battlefield makes these tabletop conflicts between tanks, troops, and turrets a far more interesting exercise.



GAMER

DIGITAL EDITION



We have pulled the best screenshots from our archives.



Read the preview and now you're ready to pre-order the game? Here you go.



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TOP PICKS



TOP PICKS

RATINGS BREAKDOWN:

@GAMER includes only the best games in our Top Picks section.

1 = Not recommended. 2 = Mediocre. 3 = Good. 4 = Excellent. 5 = Perfect.

④④④④④ A game that is a great experience, but not a masterpiece.

④④④④ A good game, but not a masterpiece. It's probably the best game you can get for the price.

④④④④ A really good game, but not a masterpiece.

④④④④ A near-perfect gaming experience.



Hey, meet the crew!

Let @GAMER's own geek squad help you to know about the best-of-the-best games out now or coming soon.

This month, we ask the gamer panel:

You can only bring one game on summer vacation. What do you take?



Malt Cabral

Summer vacation would provide me the perfect opportunity to spend some quality—and stealthy—time with my PS Vita and a copy of the *Metal Gear Solid HD Collection*.



Hollander Cooper

Honestly, I'd go all in on *League of Legends*. I'd buy 3500 worth of Riot Points, unlock every champion, and be a pro by the end of the summer. Or, at least, I'd duck less.



Alexandra Hall

Sony's *Boku no Natsuyasumi* is a summer vacation simulator. I'd take that, then never play it since I don't know Japanese. That's okay! More time to hit the beach and such.



Andrew Hayward

I'd bring *PixelJunk Monsters Deluxe* on PSP/Vita. Every so often, I get sucked back into this amazing tower defense gem, even if I have to start over (um, scratch).

74

REMEMBER ME



70 METRO:

LAST LIGHT

74 REMEMBER ME

78 STAR TREK:

THE VIDEO GAME

80 FUSE

82 DONKEY KONG

COUNTRY
RETURNS 3D

83 RESIDENT EVIL:

REVELATIONS



NOT PICKS

There weren't any games that didn't make the @GAMER cut this issue!



TOP PICKS



GAME
OF THE
MONTH

METRO: LAST LIGHT

In the subway, no one can hear you scream

• Words: Matt Cabral

THE GOOD
You'll team up with a number of non-playable characters, some of which shouldn't be trusted.

Metro 2033 was a flawed first-person shooter that managed to rise above its mechanical failings, thanks to a survival horror-tinged story, incredibly atmospheric setting, and inspired item-management systems. Now, three years later, Metro: Last Light addresses its predecessor's problems, while retaining the elements that allowed it to stand out from the tired FPS pack. It's not perfect—primarily due to a game-breaking bug—but it's one of this generation's best narratively focused fraggers.

As with the original, Last Light puts you behind the gas mask of Artyom, a young man forced to grow up in

Moscow's subway system, because nuclear winter has made the city's surface uninhabitable. Eking out an existence underground is no walk in the park, though. In addition to dealing with warring Russian and Nazi factions, the subterranean city is regularly invaded by ugly monsters; technically, humans and animals that awoke on the wrong side of the apocalypse, these mutations effectively chill spines... when not attempting to remove them with their razor-sharp claws.

Artyom faces these threats with a variety of makeshift hand-cannons and survival items. Unlike most shooters' reliable guns and gear, though, Last Light's must be carefully

managed and monitored. The game is at its tension-ratcheting best when you're scrambling to find a life-saving air filter, even as the decision to waste rare but powerful ammo on the grotesque freak fogging your gas mask weighs heavily on your fragile psyche.

Sadly, you may occasionally be pulled from such immersive moments when the game freezes, a fun-halting bug that forced me to reset on a few occasions. Still, while encountering this flaw is scarier than meeting a Metro-dwelling monster, it shouldn't keep story-driven shooter fans from braving this terrifying trek through post-apocalyptic Moscow. ©

USE YOUR HEAD

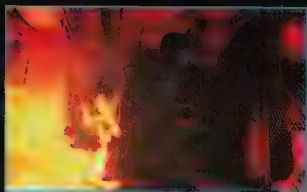
Gas masks and night-vision goggles must be maintained with air filters and battery generators, respectively.



ENVELOPS YOU
IN ITS CREEPY,
CLAUSTROPHOBIC
WORLD

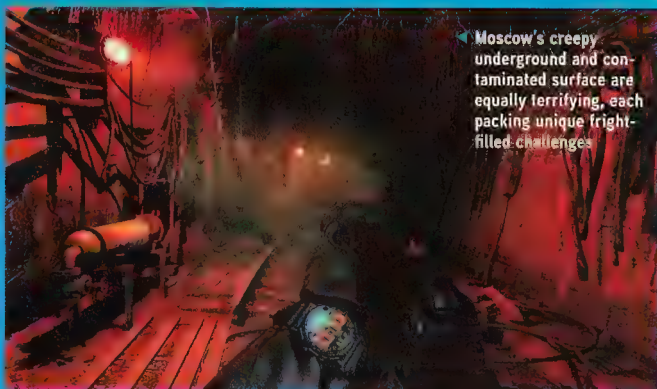


▼ Using ammo as currency, you can purchase and upgrade weapons at the Metro's hub stations.



DEATH'S IN THE DETAILS

By bathing its world in rich detail and leveraging a number of immersion-pushing tricks, *Last Light* envelopes you in its creepy, claustrophobic world. Whether wiping streams of enemy blood from a gas mask or flicking a Bic to set a cobweb ablaze, you're continually presented with organic-feeling interactions. Stealthy players will experience this to an even greater extent, as you unscrew light bulbs and power down electrical panels to remain undetected.



◀ Moscow's creepy underground and contaminated surface are equally terrifying, each packing unique fright-filled challenges

TERRIFYING TALE \\\

Last Light improves upon its predecessor's storytelling by weaving a twisty yarn, complemented by colorful characters and chilling cinematics. One such scene, which flashbacks to a commercial airliner's last moments on Earth, is truly haunting. Additionally, the Red and Nazi factions' motivations are more fleshed out, as are the mysteries surrounding the Dark Ones, supernatural creatures sharing a strange connection with Artyom.



◀ We highly recommend not strolling through a crowd of chanting soldiers, especially if they're Nazis.



MIND THE GAP... AND THE MUTANTS \\\

Familiar freaks, such as the mole-like Nosalis and winged Demons, return from *Metro 2033*, but have received a makeover courtesy of *Last Light*'s enhanced visuals. When not reminiscing with old friends, plan on meeting fresh mutants, such as oversized spidery menaces that make *Alien*'s face-huggers look playful.



GAME DETAILS



METRO: LAST LIGHT

INFO

Publisher: Deep Silver
Developer: 4A Games
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC
Reviewed on: Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE

May 14th, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

First-person shooter

SUITABLE FOR

Fans of story-focused shooters, being scared, and Russian accents



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Engaging interactions and systems management
- ♥ Compelling narrative and characters
- ♥ Ear-popping gunplay



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Gameplay-freezing bug breaks immersion
- ✗ No online mode means moderate replay value



NICK SAYS:

While *Metro 2033* had a few foibles, *Metro: Last Light* raises the bar for the fear-inspiring series.

OVERALL RATING:

4.5





TOP PICKS

REMEMBER ME

Neo-Paris is not easily forgotten
• Words: Andrew Hayward

Today's economy from La Prairie
you'll find a more pleasant world
but you'll find a better price in an
economy of more and more
like creating a winning formula

Run the evening presentation (values at the end of each session activity), as the introductory discussion indicates your brand is a faith community pointing the way to the new bridge to build an even stronger faith community. It is a time to re-join the mission that is the heart of your ministry. It is a time that, if properly planned, needs to be a game-changer.

And, like the innovative rights
 of the 1960s, the 1970s and '80s
 have been a time of great
 change. The 1970s saw the
 passage of the Clean Air Act,
 the Endangered Species Act,
 and the National Historic
 Preservation Act. The 1980s
 saw the passage of the
 National Forest Management
 Act, the National Wetlands
 Act, and the National
 Antidumping Act. The
 1990s saw the passage of
 the National Environmental
 Policy Act, the National
 Historic Preservation Act,
 and the National Antidumping
 Act. The 2000s saw the
 passage of the National
 Environmental Policy Act,
 the National Historic
 Preservation Act, and the
 National Antidumping Act.



When not taking in the sights or pummeling armored enemies, much of your time in *Remember Me* is spent scaling various structures, whether it's shimmying along overhangs or ascending towers by vaulting from ledge to ledge. In practice, it's pretty similar to the climbing navigation in *Uncharted* or *Tomb Raider*, and it's all solidly executed. Problem is, *Remember Me* aims to maximize its cinematic approach by constantly pointing you in the right direction with little markers that immediately appear on the screen. That approach leaves nothing to chance, and makes maneuvering through this gorgeous world feel oddly mundane.



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**RAVISHING WITH
VIVID COLORS
AND REMARKABLE
SETTINGS**



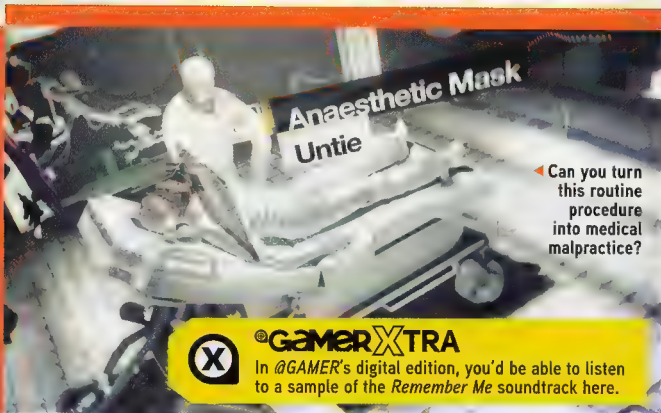
▲ **Ken's 3-Fists move is by far the most powerful attack in combat.**

CREATE-A-COMBO \\\

Remember Ken's Combo Lab feature lets you customize the breadth of available punch and kick combos using a variety of different moves. Pressing ring pop-out power to restrain your fists, among other abilities, and setting placement within the combo sequence can make or break a battle. As you unlock, master, and use additional systems, be sure to revisit your combos to maximize your chances in certain fights. Beyond the simple attack skills, Ken also has power fists, fire, a laser, and enemy with a knee-slapping kill shot. Individualize a handful of Ken's 3-Fists moves. Take to the air using a double jump, power up the ally, stunning and/or revealing invisible enemies, and giving a final combination a few extra steps affect the outcome.

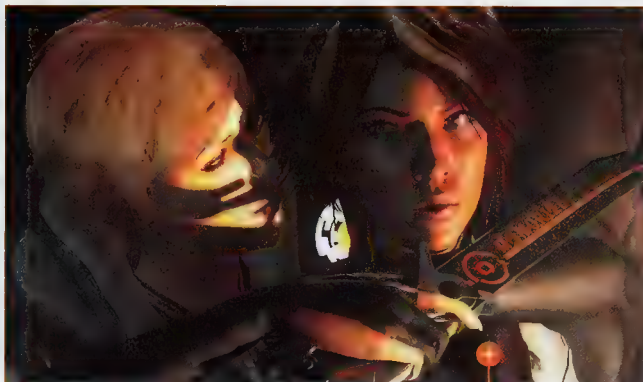


▲ **Customizing attack chains in Combo Lab lets you prioritize certain parts.**



MENTAL MISTAKES \\\

Nilin has the ability to remix others' memories, and you'll do so in a few missions by rewinding abstract footage of past events and exploiting glitches to generate a certain outcome—usually injury or death. Despite the macabre intentions, it's actually a pretty interesting approach that challenges you to find the right combination of tweaks, such as knocking over a bottle and removing the safety from a pistol. Even if you don't get it right the first time, it's fun to watch the slightly different results.



**ERRORIST AGENT ** When an amnesiac Nilin awakes in the Bastille at the start of the game, she's led out of the prison by the Errorists, who recruit her to their cause of destroying Memorize, the evil corporation that controls minds and wipes the memories of opposing forces. She's guided throughout the adventure by the voice of Edge, a man who knows an awful lot about her past. As you'll soon find out, Nilin has a very personal stake in this battle against Memorize.

REMIX
Memorize sends its forces to retrieve Nilin, but her memory-altering skill comes in handy here.

GAME DETAILS



REMEMBER ME

INFO

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Dontnod Entertainment
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC
Reviewed on: PS3, Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE

June 4, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE

Action

SUITABLE FOR

Sci-fi lovers, wannabe futurists

WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Dazzling vision of Neo-Parts with gorgeous presentation
- ♥ Story gradually gets more intriguing, with solid payoff

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Feels like a lightly interactive movie at times
- ✗ Combat is simple and slightly sluggish

CHARLIE SAYS:

I'd play a whole sandbox game in this world, but...oh well, I'll settle for a linear journey through it as well.

OVERALL RATING:

3.75





▼ Sometimes being a Starfleet officer means knowing when to run away.

"Fascinating... That blast nearly incinerated us."

"Shut it, Spock... Say 'fascinating' one more time. I dare you."

STAR TREK: THE VIDEO GAME

Team me up, Scotty • Words: Neillie Johnson

Star Trek Into Darkness hit theaters last month and Paramount's hoping to bolster the film with *Star Trek: The Video Game*, a game that's bound to be divisive. While action-loving Kirk wannabes will dig the run-and-stun formula, fans with a more Spock-like bent will likely question its logic.

It starts with a convoluted premise regarding a device powerful enough to create a new Vulcan homeworld that can also rip holes in the universe. Naturally, the device is stolen by a warlike race of lizard people who intend to use it to enslave the rest of the universe, and when hostile

alien species threaten to enslave the universe, who you gonna call?

The game focuses on Kirk and Spock, arguably the franchise's two biggest heroes, and is meant to be played cooperatively. This becomes painfully obvious if you play it alone, since single-player is rife with dunder-headed AI and poor pathfinding. Things fare better with two live players, although Kirk's "phase first, ask questions later" approach and Spock's stealth/neck-pinch strategy puts the two heroes constantly at odds.

The game looks good (especially on PC)—barring some weird mouth animations—and controls fairly well

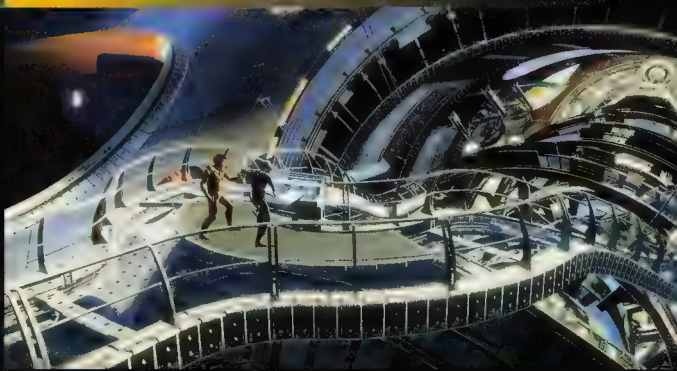
(especially on PS3 and Xbox 360). The sound features music and voice talent from the film and a couple of inspired Portal-like levels; effort was also made to mix up the gameplay with minigames, jetpacks, and turret fights, but these are poorly tutorialized and visually confusing. Worst of all, players are scarce, so "quick match" is a misnomer. Still, if you and a friend go in together, you're set for 10 action-packed hours.

Though *Star Trek* has some good aspects, it feels like a rushed production. Action-shooter fans won't have much to grumble about, but *Star Trek* fans probably won't engage. ☹



▲ "It appears this creature is not in the mood for a mind-meld."

YOU SAY POTATO, I SAY SHOOT 'EM ALL // Spock and Kirk have different attitudes in terms of fighting style: Spock cultivates a "wall and let 'em come" attitude while Kirk's a phaser-slinging action hero. Both these styles can be useful, depending on the situation. A quiet station crawling with Gorn could dictate a more tactical, stealthy approach while a power core on the verge of exploding would demand more aggressive tactics. Whatever the case, you'll have to make Kirk and Spock work together or this is gonna be one loooooong five-year mission.



NO MORE MR. NICE GORN //

The Gorn are a savage species that can't be reasoned with. Like Otter Pops, they come in different colors, but have one thing in common—a single-minded purpose to conquer new worlds and an insatiable desire to enslave alien races. They also have a thing for smooth jazz.



▲ The Gorn are known for their savagery, not their sense of humor.

PS3 XBOX 360 PC

GAME DETAILS



STAR TREK: THE VIDEO GAME

INFO

Publisher: Namco Bandai
Developer: Digital Extremes
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC
Reviewed on: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

RELEASE DATE

April 24, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

2-player drop-in co-op online or local

GENRE

Action

SUITABLE FOR

Only the most forgiving of the Enterprise crew, maybe Tribbles



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Film-quality music and voice acting
- ♥ Action-packed co-op gameplay



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Generic storyline
- ✗ Dumb AI
- ✗ Confusing alternate gameplay sequences



ANDY SAYS:

I expect that Namco Bandai is feeling the brunt of the normally unrelenting *Trek* fans over this one.

OVERALL RATING

OVERALL RATING:

3





▼ Weapons, enemies, and bosses come in limited varieties.

FUSE

Fails to fully ignite, but still provides a steady burn • Words: Scott Butterworth

Not every game needs to change the world. Sometimes 10 solid hours of intense, disposable action is all you need. And really, that's exactly what *Fuse* delivers: a co-op shooter that's competent, enjoyable, and, well...adequate. By that same token, however, it's also unambitious, un inventive, and disappointingly safe in every way but its baffling "Mature" rating.

The premise starts in well-worn territory: Four bland mercenaries must wade through six strictly linear missions filled with chest-high cover and plenty of heavily sanitized violence. The hook is that each agent—all of whom will be present whether you're playing solo or with friends—carries his or her own unique weapon powered by a mysterious energy source (cue eye roll) called Fuse.

Some are more fun to use than others, but when multiple *Fuse*-weapons are turned on the same enemy, the results can be spectacular—for example, a concentrated black hole that bursts into flames as it collapses.

While these combo attacks are honestly pretty sweet, they're also impossible to plan. Since you're constantly just trying to kill enough bad guys to get from one end of a giant room to the other, it's not practical to pick one guy and focus solely on him. It's also not necessary since enemies never require any special strategy. *Fuse*-weapons can make the process a bit more efficient, but

boring old bullets work just as well. *Fuse* is very much a stop-and-pop shooter, and the final level plays very much like the first.

In short, *Fuse*'s attempt to make co-op its own is fun but a bit flimsy. The mechanics run smoothly and the campaign is well paced, but nothing stands out, good or bad. The game starts slow and plateaus early on, offering no surprises or deviations from the standard shooter formula. Even the story relies mainly on superficial tropes. Compared to other co-op shooters this generation has produced, *Fuse* is fine. Nothing more, nothing less. ☹

**COMBO ATTACKS ARE PRETTY SWEET,
BUT ALSO IMPOSSIBLE TO PLAN**



ALL FOUR, ONE Unless you've got four human players in your game, you can swap to any free character on the fly, meaning you never have to feel locked to a certain agent. Unfortunately, not all four special weapons are equally fun to use, which could cause problems in co-op. Plus, you never really need one character or another. To an extent, they feel interchangeable.

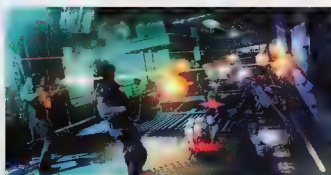


RIDIN' THAT WAVE

In addition to the campaign, *Fuse* offers an objective-based, Horde-style co-op mode called Echelon. Enemies arrive in increasingly tenacious waves while your foursome tries to survive. It's nothing new, but demanding enough to provide an enjoyable, though often frustrating, challenge. And watch out for the stupid little kamikaze robots.



▲ The upgrade system is pretty basic, but it does help open up the experience.



▲ Maybe I'm crazy, but my allies somehow felt smarter on PS3 than Xbox 360.



PS3 XBOX 360

GAME DETAILS



FUSE

INFO

Publisher: EA
Developer: Insomniac Games
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360
Reviewed on: PS3, Xbox 360

RELEASE DATE

May 28, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Up to 4-player co-op, full campaign, or Horde mode

GENRE

Third-person shooter

SUITABLE FOR

Everyone...which is sort of the problem



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ An intense campaign
- ♥ Special combo attacks give gratifying results



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ The whole game plays it safe
- ✗ Not all characters are created equal
- ✗ You can't play if you're not online, even solo



NICK SAYS:

It's unrealistic to think that every game should be perfect. Still, a little creativity would've been nice.

OVERALL RATING:

3.5



gamer



DONKEY KONG COUNTRY RETURNS 3D

The title says it all, really | Words: Alexandra Hall



DONKEY KONG COUNTRY RETURNS 3D

INFO

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Monster Games/
Retro Studios
Platforms: 3DS

RELEASE DATE

May 24, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

2-player local co-op

GENRE

Platformer

SUITABLE FOR

Waggle-hating DKC fans,
incurable double dippers

GAME DETAILS

Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should. Donkey Kong Country Returns was decent on Wii, and so it is on 3DS, too. But it's far from necessary on 3DS, and even comes off a little diminished on Nintendo's less powerful portable.

If you've played Rare's original SNES DKC games, you know what to expect: Hopping and bopping with a plastic-looking gorilla, a fair few collectibles, and a smattering of hidden bonus stages, many of which feature mysteriously propulsive barrels. Since DKCR originated on Wii, it's surprising how well Monster Games has been able to make its graphics pop on 3DS. DKCR3D also features an (optional) easier difficulty level, and a handful of new stages.

But all's not fine amid these vines. DKCR3D runs at something like half the framerate of the Wii original; it looks okay, but the controls feel more sluggish than they should. Nor is the 3DS' analog stick ideal for this sort of gameplay, so I racked up major cramps using the 3DS' poorly placed D-pad. My attention began wandering fairly early; despite the slick level designs, the simplistic run-n-jump action never gains enough complexity or finesse. Sometimes it's hard, sure, but it rarely transcends its too-basic formula.

DKCR3D is kinda like comfort food. It's nothing fancy, but if you're jonesin' for what Nintendo's cooking then here's another bowl of it. ☺

IT'S SURPRISING
HOW WELL ITS
GRAPHICS POP

WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Nicely crafted levels
- ♥ Strong 3D effect
- ♥ Offers a bit of new content for 3DS

WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Samey action needs a stronger hook
- ✗ Controls still somewhat problematic

CHARLIE SAYS:

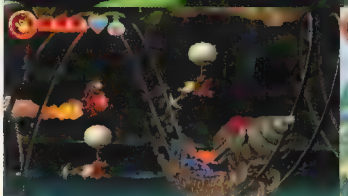
Is there some version of "Aquatic Ambiance" music in here? That's literally all I need to know. (Yes!—AH)

OVERALL RATING:

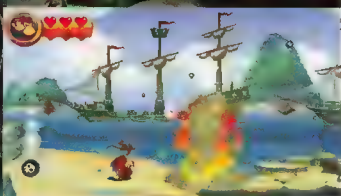
3.75



camer



TAKE IT ALL INTO YOUR HANDS
If you found the original Wii game too Wii Remote-smashingly challenging then you might want to go with DKCR3D's New Mode. It adds several new power-ups that will save your simian equivalent of bacon when the action gets hairy. Super Guide's in, too, so if you die too often, you can let the CPU take over. Accessibility is good!



RESIDENT EVIL
REVELATIONS

INFO

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360,
Wii U, PC
Reviewed on: Xbox 360, Wii U

RELEASE DATE

May 21, 2013

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

2-player co-op online

GENRE

Survival horror

SUITABLE FOR

Anyone looking for a slower,
classic take on zombiecide

▼ The enemies aren't varied,
but they're awesomely
gruesome.

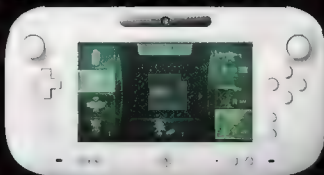
RESIDENT EVIL REVELATIONS

A zombie-infested trip that'll remind you of *Resident Evil's* origins

• Words: Hollander Cooper

Fans of survival horror praised *Resident Evil Revelations* when it was released for the 3DS last year, applauding the return to the moody atmosphere that the franchise was founded on. While that classical approach to the genre will likely strike a nostalgic chord with fans, the transition from handheld to console isn't without its problems. The world is broken into short, segmented sections that throw the pacing off, making the otherwise moody 10-hour adventure feel stunted and stilted. But once you're past that hurdle, you'll love working through *Revelations'* parallel stories to reveal a complicated conspiracy involving biological weapons—aka lots of big scary monsters.

Though there's no co-op in the campaign, the omission is made up for with *Raid* mode, allowing you to team up with another player to sweep through areas for points. It's a more complex, fulfilling version of *Mercenaries* mode, and helps to make *Revelations* one of the most satisfying *Resident Evil* games in years—even if the franchise is still straddling an awkward space between horror and action. ☺



▲ The Wii U version features Miiverse support and other exclusive features.



▲ Learning to dodge enemy attacks is key to not ending up as zombie chow.

R.E. THERE YET?

In many ways, *Revelations* is one of the most advanced *Resident Evil* games yet. There's an auto-save, you can move and shoot, and the story provides helpful recaps before each chapter.



WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ A more classic take on the genre
- ♥ Impressive atmosphere and setting
- ♥ Fun, frightening scares



WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Truly terrible dialogue
- ✗ Segmented style hurt pacing
- ✗ Lack of enemy variety



NICK SAYS:

Revelations is a game-changing entry for the series. There's moving and shooting, people!



OVERALL RATING:

4





Words: Ryan Scott and Andrew Hayward

DOWNLOAD DIGEST

Interested in downloadable games? @GAMER's dedicated review column covers new titles, episodes, and add-ons for console and PC.

Grab those gems, you dapper gentleman!



Fast and easy. Well, at first, anyway.



Who'd win in a fight? Some questions have no right answer.



POKER NIGHT 2

Publisher/Developer: Telltale Games • Price: \$5
Platforms: PSN/XBLA/PC (April 23, 2013)

You probably know Telltale for its adventure games, but it makes a darned fine card game, too. *Poker Night 2* offers well-done renditions of Texas Hold 'Em and Omaha, pitting you against another oddball cast, ranging from the hilarious and well-written Sam and Brock Samson (of *Sam & Max* and *Venture Bros.* fame, respectively), and oddly dull undead-hunter Ash Williams. But it's really worth it just to hear transplanted *Portal* icon GlaDOS crack wise as dealer.—RS

OVERALL RATING: 4.0



BATTLEBLOCK THEATER

Publisher: Microsoft Developer: The Behemoth
Price: \$15 Platforms: XBLA (April 3, 2013)

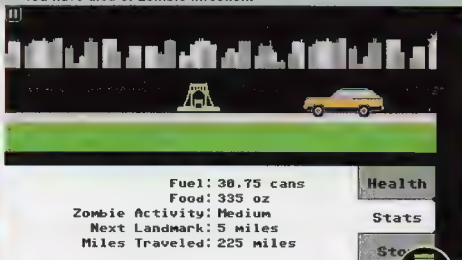
From a pure mechanical viewpoint, *BattleBlock Theater* is a perfectly conventional puzzle-platformer: Your block-faced avatar skitters through narrow corridors and scales teetering platforms, socking troublesome baddies and snatching up all-precious gems that unlock further levels. Challenge are brief and lend to repeat playthroughs for higher rankings, and the structure feels—as so many modern platformers do—very much inspired by today's crop of high-quality mobile games.

The presentation is where *BattleBlock* really shines, though. As always, The Behemoth exhibits the sort of narrative verve that most developers rarely match; the game's exuberant storyteller verbally over-punctuates every silly sound effect and wacky plot twist, practically bleeding the sort of wide-eyed wonder that's apt to remind us—if only for a moment—what it's like to be a kid again, completely enthralled by the goofy, charming puppet show unfolding before our eyes in this vibrant and colorful world. Aptly enough, you should bring a friend to the show, too: Solo *BattleBlock* is tantamount to playing *Contra* without a wingman. Still fun, but not nearly as much.—RS

OVERALL RATING: 4.25



• You have died of zombie infection.



ORGAN TRAIL: DIRECTOR'S CUT

Publisher/Developer: The Men Who Wear Many Hats • Price: \$5
Platforms: PC (March 19, 2013)

Gamers of a certain age doubtlessly spent many a grade-school computer class staving off disease in MECC's pseudo-educational Apple II strategy game, *The Oregon Trail*. Now, picture it faithfully remade—in the same graphical style—as a post-zombie-apocalypse survival epic, with undead mobs and decimated towns replacing deadly rivers and countryside rest stops. The cleverly titled *Organ Trail* is the same fun game, with a deliciously creative modern makeover.—RS

OVERALL RATING: 4.0



FAR CRY 3: BLOOD DRAGON

Publisher: Ubisoft • Developer: Ubisoft Montreal •
Price: \$15 • Platforms: PSN/XBLA/PC (May 1, 2013)

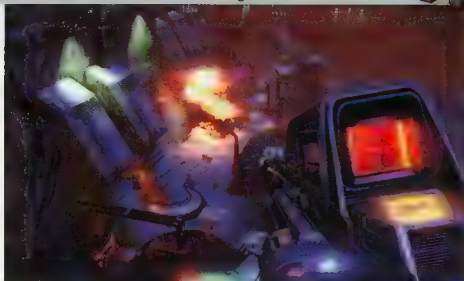
Trading the bright sunlight and lush greenery of *Far Cry 3*'s main game for a constant red-and-purple haze, *Blood Dragon* is a supremely odd standalone expansion that's designed as an homage to the sci-fi action movies and videogames of the 1980s. Cybernetic soldiers and the massive, titular beasts are your prey in a compact single-player campaign that puts you in the role of Sgt. Rex "Power" Colt, a hardened soldier with a robotic eye (plus arm) and plenty of macho quips.

Like its progenitor, *Blood Dragon* is set on an open island—albeit a smaller one, in line with the reduced scale and price—full of wildlife and side missions, not to mention random encounters. It's similar to *Far Cry 3* in feel and mechanics, but not demeanor; this is a confidently dumb tribute to (and parody of) the clichés of the aforementioned era, with the pixel-based cut-scenes and wonderfully synth-centric soundtrack driving the point home. The jokey tone and crassness wear thin occasionally, but it remains a very fun riff that serves as a great, bite-sized popcorn shooter. —AH

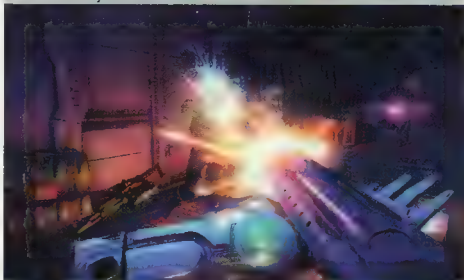
OVERALL RATING: 4.0



It's the future—as viewed through the lens of the '80s.



You won't just find natural terrain on this island.



Arcade joy with the convenience of paying your quarters upfront.



SACRED CITADEL

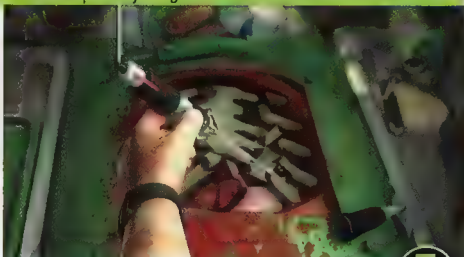
Publisher: Deep Silver • Developer: SouthEnd Interactive
Price: \$15 • Platforms: PSN/XBLA/PC (April 17, 2013)

I'll never turn down a good beat-em-up, and *Sacred Citadel* channels just enough frantic button-mashing feel to satisfy my nostalgic urge. The concept—four archetypal classes set forth to vanquish evil—is nothing new, but it's an excuse to grab some friends, kill a bunch of stuff, and yell at each other for stealing the potion or super-cool weapon drop you wanted. Between this and the upcoming *Dragon's Crown*, 2013 is lookin' good for retro arcade sidescrollers. —RS

OVERALL RATING: 3.5



This will probably not go well.



SURGEON SIMULATOR 2013

Publisher/Developer: Bossa Studios • Price: \$10 •
Platforms: PC (April 19, 2013)

Can bad controls be a selling point? That's mostly what defines *Surgeon Simulator 2013*, which has you wrestling with the looziest, goosiest physics ever implemented, trying to (often fruitlessly) grasp instruments and perform delicate transplants. You're in control of a single hand—digit-by-digit—and the fun usually lies in discovering just how badly you can screw up the simple act of picking something up. The game won't enthrall you for long, but you certainly won't forget it, either. —RS

OVERALL RATING: 3.5



OF GAMER
RATINGS

GAME/PRODUCT	ISSUE #	SCORE OUT OF 5
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007 Legends 25 2.5

Adventure Time: Hey Ice King, Why'd You Steal Our Garbage? 26 3.75

Aliens: Colonial Marines 27 3.0

Anarchy Reigns 26 3.5

Army of Two The Devil's Cartel 29 2.5

Assassin's Creed III 24 4.5

Assassin's Creed III (Wii U) 26 4.5

Assassin's Creed III Liberation 24 3.5

Batman: Arkham City

—Armored Edition 26 4.75

BioShock Infinite 28 5.0

Brain Age:

Concentration Training 27 4.25

Call of Duty: Black Ops II 25 4.5

Call of Duty: Black Ops II (Wii U) 26 4.25

Call of Duty Black Ops:

Declassified 25 3.5

Castlevania: Lords of Shadow—

Mirror of Fate 28 4.5

The Croods: Prehistoric Party! 29 3.0

Crysis 3 27 4.0

Darksiders II (Wii U) 26 4.5

Dead Island Riptide 29 3.75

Dead or Alive 5 Plus 29 4.0

Dead Space 3 27 3.75

Deadly Premonition:

The Director's Cut 29 4.25

Defiance 29 4.0

Disney Epic Mickey:

Power of Illusion 25 5.0

Disney Epic Mickey 2:

Power of Two 25 3.5

Disney Epic Mickey 2:

The Power of Two (Wii U) 26 3.0

DmC: Devil May Cry 27 4.75

Donkey Kong Country Returns 3D 30 3.75

Dragon's Dogma: Dark Arisen 29 4.25

Etrian Odyssey IV:

Legends of the Titan 28 4.5

F1 Race Stars 25 3.0

Fable: The Journey 24 4.5

Far Cry 3 25 4.0

Fire Emblem: Awakening 27 4.5

Fist of the North Star:

Ken's Rage 2 27 3.25

Forza Horizon 24 4.5

Funky Barn 26 3.0

Fuse 30 3.5

GAME/PRODUCT	ISSUE #	SCORE OUT OF 5
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Game Party Champions 26 2.5

Gears of War: Judgment 28 4.5

God of War: Ascension 28 4.5

Guacamelee 29 4.5

Halo 4 24 4.5

The Hip Hop Dance Experience 26 3.5

Hitman: Absolution 25 4.0

Hitman HD: Trilogy 27 4.0

Injustice: Gods Among Us 29 4.25

Just Dance 4 24 3.25

LEGO City Undercover 28 4.25

LEGO City Undercover:

The Chase Begins 29 2.75

LEGO The Lord of the Rings 26 4.0

LittleBigPlanet Karting 25 4.5

Luigi's Mansion: Dark Moon 28 4.0

Madden NFL 13 (Wii U) 26 3.75

Marvel Avengers: Battle for Earth 25 3.5

Marvel Avengers:

Battle for Earth (Wii U) 26 2.75

Mass Effect 3 (Wii U) 26 4.75

Medal of Honor Warfighter 25 3.0

Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance 27 4.5

Metro: Last Light 30 4.5

Midway Arcade Origins 26 4.0

MLB 13 The Show 28 4.0

MLB 2K13 28 2.5

Monster Hunter 3 Ultimate 28 4.25

Naruto Powerful Shippuden 27 4.0

Naruto Shippuden:

Ultimate Ninja Storm 3 27 3.5

NASCAR The Game: Inside Line 24 3.0

NBA 2K13 (Wii U) 26 4.25

Need for Speed Most Wanted 24 4.75

Need for Speed

Most Wanted U 28 4.75

New Super Mario Bros. U 25 4.25

Ni no Kuni:

Wrath of the White Witch 26 4.25

NIKE+ Kinect Training 26 4.25

Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge 29 3.5

Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus 28 3.0

Nintendo Land 25 3.25

Omeria: City of Gangsters 27 4.5

Pandora's Tower 29 3.5

GAME/PRODUCT	ISSUE #	SCORE OUT OF 5
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Paper Mario: Sticker Star 25 4.0

Persona 4 Golden 26 4.5

PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale 25 3.5

Pokémon Black/White 2 24 4.0

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon:

Gate to Infinity 29 2.75

Power Rangers Super Samurai 26 3.0

Professor Layton

& the Miracle Mask 25 4.0

Ratchet & Clank:

Full Frontal Assault 26 3.25

Remember Me 30 3.75

Resident Evil: Revelations 30 4.0

Resident Evil 6 (PC) 29 4.0

Rift: Storm Legion 25 4.25

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FEAR

93





GEAR

Where to purchase? Online

Visit www.bestbuy.com
for info on availability.

- 90 Astro A40 2013 Edition Gaming Headset
- 91 Turtle Beach XP510 Gaming Headset
- 92 Logitech G19s Gaming Keyboard
- 93 ViewSonic VX2770Smh 27" LCD Monitor
- 94 Razer Nostromo Gaming Keypad
- 95 Afterglow Wii U Pro Controller



NICK SAYS:

I'll admit, for me the toughest part of putting together an issue of @GAMER is always the Gear section. With so many great products hitting store shelves all the time, it's tough to pick just a few to feature! This month we pit the 2013 Astro A40s against Turtle Beach's latest XP510 headset. Who won? Read on to find out.



OUTSTANDING SOUND

5250 may seem steep, but you get what you pay for — Words: Ryan Taljonic

In the realm of gaming headsets, Astro's A40s have long been considered a top-tier contender. Its recent 2013 edition features a few minor changes, such as a quick disconnect and slightly retuned drivers, which make this model the definitive version of Astro's wired set.

The 2013 A40 includes every cable necessary to hook it up to any system or any device with a 3.5mm output. It's a cinch to set up, and I have yet to find another set comparable to its incredible level of comfort—even after gaming sessions of five or more hours, the earcups were breathable and cozy.

The mixamp packaged with the headset has nice features as well, including separate game and voice volume controls and four distinct presets. Each of these sharpened certain auditory cues, such as explosions in first-person shooters, improving the sound quality and my gaming experience.

ASTRO A40, 2013 EDITION

Manufacturer: Astro
www.astrogaming.com
Price: \$249.99

OVERALL SCORE: 4.5



01 COMFY CUPS

For lengthy gaming sessions, comfort is key. In that regard, the A40s absolutely deliver.

02 MIXAMP MAGIC

This bad boy allows the A40s to simulate 5.1 surround sound (which sounds fantastic!), and has four audio presets.

03 MEGA MIC

The adjustable mic can be attached to either side of the headset, and is pliable yet sturdy.



WIRELESS WARFARE

A new contender enters the ring
Words: Ryan Taljorick

Turtle Beach's new top-tier wireless headset, the XP510, is an exceptional unit with clear, balanced sound and more features than you'll likely ever use. As such, it's the only worthy rival I've found to Astro's A50 wireless offering.

The XP510 comes packaged with every cable necessary to hook it up to any system, including your PS3, Xbox 360, PC, or mobile devices. The setup is easy, and the wireless transceiver doubles as an attractive stand.

I found the quality of the set's mids and highs to surpass that of the Astro A50s, though its bass is a bit weaker in comparison. It's plenty comfortable for lengthy gaming sessions, though the many plastic buttons embedded in the outside of the ear cups felt a bit cheap, and my friends reported the XP510's microphone to sound a bit muffled.

But these minor grievances are easy to overlook, thanks to the unit's fantastic sound quality, huge offering of presets (such as one that amplifies footsteps for FPS fanatics), and long-lasting battery life. If you're tired of wires and hungry for great audio, the XP510s are sure to meet your needs.

02

COMMAND CENTER

The XP510's numerous presets and mode selections are located on the earcups, making it easy to push the wrong button by accident.



01

COMFORTABLE

The foam padding on the headband makes even the lengthiest of gaming sessions comfortable.



04

CUP HOLDER

The wireless transceiver not only allows the device to simulate 5.1 surround sound, but it also makes a slick stand for the cans.

TURTLE BEACH EAR FORCE XP510 WIRELESS GAMING HEADSET

Manufacturer: Turtle Beach
www.turtlebeach.com

Price: \$289.99

OVERALL SCORE: 4



03

EXTRA FOAMY

The memory foam padding covers the ear entirely and remains comfortable even during extended play.



QUANTITY OVER QUALITY

This keyboard is rich in features at the expense of practicality

Words: Ryan Taljonic

One look at Logitech's G19s (a reskin of 2009's G19 model with a stain-resistant gloss finish) will have any PC gamer foaming at the mouth. It's got an attractive LCD display perfect for presenting in-game information (such as ammo count in an FPS or character stats in MMOs); it has on-board memory for storing custom profiles, a built-in USB hub, and a slew of programmable macro buttons; and you can customize the color scheme of its backlit keys to your exact preferences.

But all of these lovely features come at the expense of mechanical keys and an affordable price tag. The rubber dome keys on

this high-end board are of a quality similar to the ones you'd find on a \$15 no-brand alternative, and its LCD screen, while useful in theory, isn't all that practical because it forces you to take your eyes off your PC display. I found this screen's utility functions—such as monitoring CPU usage or using it as a video chat c

games—to be far more useful. It's hard to justify dropping \$200 on a keyboard, even one as feature-rich as Logitech's G19s. Unless you've got some serious cash burning a hole in your pocket, this board is a hard sell compared to its less expensive, more practical competitors. **C**

01 OKAY KEYS

The G19s' rubber dome keys can't compare to mechanical switches, but the board's three-year warranty should alleviate some concern.



02 LCD DISPLAY

This screen's utility functions, such as countdown timers or chat client monitoring, are more useful than in-game applets.

LOGITECH G19S KEYBOARD

Manufacturer: Logitech
www.logitech.com

Price: \$199.99

OVERALL SCORE: 3.5



VIEWSONIC
VX2770SMH 27"
LCD MONITOR

Manufacturer: ViewSonic
www.viewsonic.com
Price: \$299.99

OVERALL SCORE: 4.75



03 SOUND STATION

This built-in speaker doesn't have amazing quality by any means, but will suffice if you have no audio alternatives.

VISUALLY STUNNING

This vibrant display is worth every penny Words: Ryan Taljonic

When shopping around for a new display, you'll have to decide between two popular types: TN panels, which have fast response times to reduce motion blur, and IPS panels, which exchange vastly improved color accuracy for slower response times.

ViewSonic's VX2770Smh, a gorgeous 27" LED-backlit monitor, is of the latter variety, sporting crisp, vibrant colors and a sexy frameless chassis with mounted speakers underneath. Visually, it's crystal

clear, and even in motion-intensive games, such as *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*, I hardly noticed any ghosting.

The only downsides of this unit are that you can't adjust its height (though you can tilt its angle to your liking), it's not wall mountable, and the touch-menu buttons are out of reach above the speaker. Still, the color quality is astounding and the motion blur minimal, making this a fantastic buy for any and all of your needs. @



RAZER NOSTROMO GAMING KEYPAD

Manufacturer: Razer

www.razerzone.com

Price: \$69.99

OVERALL SCORE: 3.75



02 PALM GRIP

The Nostromo features a comfortable, ergonomic palm rest that doesn't get sweaty during long sessions.

01 SCROLL STICK

The joystick/D-pad combo is far too resistant and unwieldy to be practical while playing a game.



03 LIGHT BRIGHT

The backlit keys are plenty easy to see while gaming in the dark—especially the scroll wheel, which is practically blinding.

CONTROL CENTER

A (mostly) great keyboard supplement • Words: Ryan Taljionick

While the standard keyboard and mouse remains the most versatile—and familiar—combination of input devices, sometimes a few dedicated keys will do the trick. That's where Razer's Nostromo comes in.

The Nostromo makes for a great supplemental device for games that

only utilize a handful of buttons (think shooters or MOBAs, such as League of Legends). It takes some getting used to, but its ergonomic design is plenty comfortable and poses no risk of inducing carpal-tunnel syndrome. The Nostromo's keys are incredibly easy to reach and can be mapped to your liking.

However, I wish it had just a few more keys, and its scroll wheel and thumbstick were difficult to reach and use during white-knuckle encounters. If you're willing to spend some time with the Nostromo, though, it's hard to go back to the ol' keyboard when playing games that don't need it. 

A WARM GLOW, BUT NO FIRE

PDP's wireless Wii U controller could use a bit of work • Words: Nick Pino

Making a two-tier controller is a balancing act. Developers are constantly weighing pack-in features and materials against such things as price point and marketability. PDP's mid-level class wireless Wii U controller has mostly high prices, but at the end of the day compromised a touch too much

to fill its niche of an inexpensive light controller.

For an example, take a hard look at the controller's face buttons. While they're incredibly responsive, they were just too tiny for my adult thumb to press accurately 100% of the time. However, PDP did well to recognize

most controllers' charging cords can run up short, and responded with a generously long USB cable that kept me in the game even when my battery was running low. While it's not my go-to controller for the console, this luminescent accessory should be the staple for all late-night gaming binges. ☺

AFTERGLOW WII U PRO CONTROLLER

Manufacturer: Performance
Designed Products
www.pdp.com

Price: \$39.99

OVERALL SCORE: 3.5



01 OH, SNAP!

Triggers click with a satisfying snap and the bumpers, while a tad flimsy, never hindered my gameplay.

02 I'VE GOT A SYNC-ING FEELING

Syncing up with your Wii U is a cinch—just hit the red buttons on the console and controller, and you're good to go.

03

The eye-catching blue glow of the controller is almost as attractive as its \$39.99 price point.



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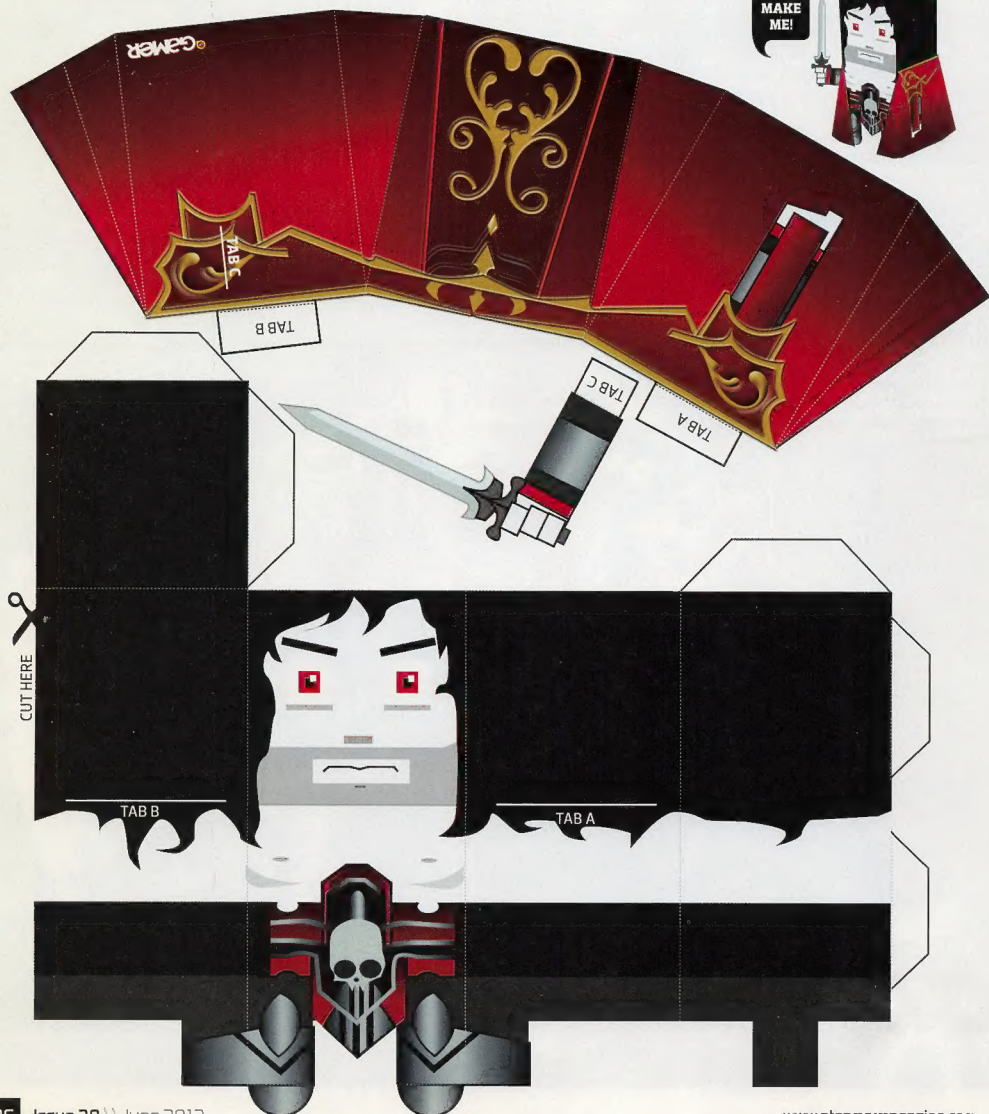
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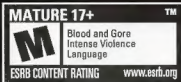
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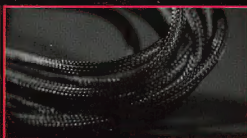
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